

TOWN OF MONTAGUE HOUSING PLAN

2004

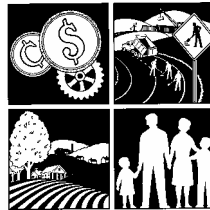


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**Prepared by the
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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Diverse, high quality, affordable housing is important for the health of communities. The Town of Montague is committed to promoting quality housing that is affordable for its residents and to addressing community housing issues. The Town works closely with the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) and other regional organizations to improve Montague's housing stock and to establish short-term and long-term housing strategies. Montague has also engaged in planning initiatives, including the Montague Comprehensive Plan (1999) and the recently completed Open Space and Recreation Plan (2003) to help guide future residential growth, and is working on zoning changes to support the town's vision for its future.

Montague's housing stock is diverse. Approximately 55% of the housing units in town are single-family homes, 17% are in two-family dwellings, 26% are units in multi-family buildings, and 2% are mobile homes. In addition, Montague has a large number of renters, with rental housing comprising 39% of the town's total housing stock. Montague's housing is more diverse than that of most other communities in Franklin County. Most Franklin County towns typically have housing that consists of at least 75-80% single-family homes, and 20-25% rental units (including single-family homes).

Montague's housing is also relatively affordable. Housing is generally considered to be affordable when households spend no more than 30% of gross income on housing costs. Under this definition, housing in Montague is currently affordable for most residents. In addition, Montague has a large supply of long-term affordable housing (more than 325 housing units) and has almost achieved the 10% affordable housing goal established by the Massachusetts Legislature under Chapter 40B (the Comprehensive Permit Law). Montague has more housing with guaranteed long-term affordability than any town in Franklin County with the exception of Orange and Greenfield. In addition, in the past few years, the Town of Montague has worked with HRA and its partner Rural Development Inc. to support housing rehabilitation and redevelopment projects and the creation of more units of long-term affordable housing.

Montague officials recognize that despite the diversity and general affordability of housing in town, some residents still have burdensome housing costs or face other significant housing issues. For example, 31% of Montague residents age 65 and over have housing that is unaffordable based on their income. Also, 19% of residents in the village of Turners Falls live below the poverty line and have special difficulties finding housing and affording housing-related expenditures. Related concerns are the age and condition of some of the older housing stock in the downtown areas, and the need to maintain and preserve these structures. Older housing is often more affordable than newer homes. The Town of Montague is working with its community partners to develop new affordable housing, improve the quality of existing affordable units and address other housing issues in the town.

This Housing Plan presents an overview of housing in Montague. It discusses how well the current housing supply is meeting demand, evaluates housing affordability, and assesses which areas of Montague may be most suitable for new residential development.

The Housing Plan is organized into the following sections:

- A list of goals and objectives for housing in Montague;
- A discussion of the planning and legislative context for affordable housing;
- A summary of Montague's current housing characteristics,
- A review of population characteristics that influence housing demand;
- An assessment of housing costs and affordability in Montague;
- An analysis of which areas of Montague may be most suitable for new housing development; and
- Recommendations and strategies for helping the Town meet its housing goals and objectives.

Housing Goals and Objectives

The following are key goals and objectives for housing in Montague. These goals and objectives have been developed with input from town staff and from the members of the Montague Housing Plan Committee, which is overseeing this plan.

Goals

- To maintain and enhance quality of life in the town's residential neighborhoods.
- To encourage a mix of housing types, densities, prices and ownership patterns that serve diverse Montague households while maintaining the community's character.
- To direct growth and development of new housing to areas that have the resources and services to accommodate it, while protecting important agricultural, natural, scenic and historic resources from residential sprawl.

Objectives

- Preserve and improve the existing housing stock, especially in downtown areas of Turners Falls and Millers Falls, and in the Lake Pleasant neighborhood.
- Support the reuse of vacant and underutilized structures in the downtown areas for housing or mixed residential and commercial development, as appropriate.
- Develop specific projects and initiatives to provide housing for special needs populations, including the elderly, disabled and low-income families.
- Continue to expand the current regional approach to addressing housing issues through collaboration with the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and other regional organizations.
- Encourage creation of new housing units in the areas that have been designated as the most suitable for future residential growth.
- Protect areas with important natural and agricultural resources from residential development that could be detrimental.
- Review the Montague Zoning Bylaws and consider zoning changes to promote the town's housing goals.

Planning and Legislative Context

This section provides background information and context for the Housing Plan. It summarizes Massachusetts legislation that encourages affordable housing, including Executive Order 418 and Chapter 40B. It also discusses the Town of Montague's historic and current activities to address housing issues in the community.

Legislation to Promote Affordable Housing

Executive Order 418 (EO 418)

Issued in 2000 by former Governor Cellucci, Executive Order 418 (EO 418) continues the Commonwealth's long commitment of encouraging the creation of affordable housing. Entitled "Assisting Communities in Addressing the Housing Shortage," EO 418 provided new incentives and resources for communities to promote housing development. The directive provided funding to create plans, such as this one, to help municipalities consider how to grow in the future, and to help them establish options and strategies for addressing future development. Montague's 2003 Open Space and Recreation Plan was also funded through EO 418.

In addition to encouraging planning, EO 418 established a new affordable housing certification process. Beginning in 2001, municipalities were required to obtain housing certification to be eligible to receive funds through certain grant programs, and to receive bonus rating points for other grant programs. The affected programs are administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), the Department of Economic Development (DED) and the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction (EOTC). The grant programs requiring housing certification are expected to provide a total of \$91 million in funding to communities statewide in Fiscal Year 2004 (which started July 1, 2003). The competitive grant programs which give a rating bonus for housing certification should provide \$487 million.

To receive housing certification, communities must demonstrate that they are working to increase their supply of housing that is affordable to individuals and families across a broad range of incomes. Housing certification is obtained on an annual basis. Montague received housing certification for FY 2001, FY 2002, and FY 2003. For FY 2004, Montague received housing certification through a regional application that was submitted on behalf of all Franklin County towns by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority. As of the writing of this plan, the future of the EO 418 Housing Certification process is unclear, but it is likely that municipalities will continue to be required to demonstrate progress on housing creation to maintain eligibility for many discretionary grant programs.

Chapter 40B

In 1969, the Massachusetts Legislature passed the Comprehensive Permit Law (MGL Chapter 40B, Sections 20-23) to promote creation of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households statewide. Known as Chapter 40B, the legislation streamlined the development permit process for affordable housing projects and established a goal of increasing the amount of long-term affordable housing in each community to 10% of the total housing stock. Under Chapter 40B, communities with less than 10% long-term affordable housing may be required to allow new housing developments that override local zoning restrictions, such as density and setback requirements. In these communities, a developer can submit an application for a comprehensive permit for an affordable housing development that does not adhere to local zoning. Local review of the proposal is limited. This application is acted upon by the local Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). If the ZBA denies the permit, the developer may appeal the decision to the State Housing Appeals Committee, which can — and often does — overrule the local ZBA decision and allow the housing project to proceed.

The Chapter 40B definition of “affordable housing” is more restrictive than the general definition based on housing costs not exceeding 30% of household income. In determining a town’s total number of affordable housing units under Chapter 40B, the Massachusetts government has historically included only state- or federally-subsidized units with guaranteed long-term affordability for low- and moderate-income households. Rental units and sales of units must be restricted to affordable levels for at least 30 years after construction. All unsubsidized units have been excluded from Chapter 40B status, even if their monthly costs are less than 30% of the low or moderate household income thresholds.

This restriction has been a disadvantage to rural communities, such as towns in Franklin County, where subsidized housing is less likely to be developed, but where housing costs relative to income are generally lower than in metropolitan areas. Even with these restrictions, however, as of October 2001, 8.6% of housing units (327 units) in Montague were affordable under the Chapter 40B definition. The only communities in Franklin County with more affordable housing in 2001 than Montague were Greenfield (13.9%) and Orange (13.4%).¹

The State has recently begun to expand the Chapter 40B definition of affordable housing to count additional types of units towards the 10% goal. Among the units that can now count as affordable under Chapter 40B are locally subsidized housing units, long-term housing for the mentally ill or mentally retarded, accessory apartments developed after June 30, 2002, and housing created through the Community Preservation Act². These types of housing are now considered affordable as long as they are serving low- or moderate-income residents. Montague's affordable housing percentage under Chapter 40B is likely to increase as a result of these changes.

The State has also been working to revise other aspects of Chapter 40B to provide communities with more flexibility and local control in expanding their affordable housing supply. As a result of these changes, when a community has not yet reached the 10% affordable housing level, but has demonstrated a commitment to expanding its affordable housing, the local Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) may deny a Chapter 40B development permit. This commitment can be demonstrated, in part, through Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) certification of a local housing production plan. In addition, Boards of Appeals can now refuse to issue permits for large-scale housing projects that are inappropriately sized for their communities.

Further revisions to Chapter 40B are under consideration. In 2003, Governor Romney established a Chapter 40B Task Force to review the current law and suggest changes. The Task Force's final report and recommendations were released in the Spring of 2003, and are now being reviewed by the Governor and the Legislature.

¹ The latest DHCD Chapter 40B housing inventory (October 2001) indicates that Wendell also has over 10 percent affordable housing. However, Wendell's affordable housing count may be overstated, as some of the counted units may not have guaranteed long-term affordability for low and moderate-income households. As a result, DHCD is in the process of revising Wendell's affordable housing figures. The new numbers may show Wendell to have significantly fewer affordable housing units, and less than 10% in total.

² The Community Preservation Act is local option legislation that gives municipalities the ability to impose an additional local property tax to raise funds for affordable housing, open space protection and historic preservation. Communities that adopt the legislation have access to state matching funds for eligible projects. Montague has not adopted the Community Preservation Act as of the writing of this plan.

Regional and Town Initiatives and Policies to Create Affordable Housing

Franklin Regional Council of Governments Regional Policy Plan

In 1998, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) developed the Regional Policy Plan to help guide future growth in Franklin County. The Plan includes an assessment of housing affordability on a regional basis. Implementation steps for the Plan's housing-related recommendations include close coordination between communities and the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority. The Plan also addresses transportation and regional land use. It suggests areas that may be suitable for future residential development and discusses transportation options for serving new homes.

Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority and Rural Development Inc.

The Town of Montague works closely with the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) to address local housing needs. HRA was created in 1973 by the Massachusetts Legislature as the Commonwealth's first regional public housing authority. At that time, the State recognized that the 26 towns of Franklin County, as small communities in the State's most rural county, did not have sufficient access to housing and community development resources, and were unlikely to develop and sustain adequate housing and community development capacity independently. HRA was established to help address housing and development issues and to assist with development projects, both for the region as a whole and for local communities.

HRA works with Montague and other communities in the region on a variety of housing concerns. HRA provides counseling for first-time homebuyers, tenants and landlords, and offers assistance and funding for the rehabilitation of single-family and multi-family structures, compliance with state septic system (Title 5) requirements and municipal infrastructure improvements. HRA also owns and manages the Winslow Wentworth House, a 17-unit congregate home for elders in Turners Falls. The Winslow Wentworth House includes two barrier-free wheelchair accessible units, and currently has openings. HRA rehabbed Keith Apartments and the Highland School for senior housing, and then turned them over to the Montague Housing Authority for management. HRA's funding primarily comes from public state and federal sources.

HRA works closely with Rural Development Inc. (RDI), an independent, private, nonprofit offshoot of the agency that builds affordable homes and rental housing for seniors, families and people with special needs. RDI has developed more than \$15 million in single and multi-family housing in the past ten years. Ten to twelve homes are now built each year in the region; more than 60 RDI homes have been constructed in the past seven years. The resources that RDI uses for its projects come from a variety of sources, including the Massachusetts Department of Community Development (DHCD) HOME Program, U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Program, and Self-Help Opportunity Program of the Housing Assistance Council.

To date, HRA and RDI have secured more than \$220 million in housing and community development resources for Franklin County towns. HRA and RDI programs help hundreds of families each year in Franklin County. HRA and RDI are very flexible in working with communities, and try to tailor their programs and projects in each town to the housing issues identified by the individual community.

At the local level, HRA assists Montague with its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications and provides program administration for the grants. CDBG funds come from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and in Massachusetts, are channeled to communities through DHCD. HRA also coordinates the Montague's housing rehabilitation program. This program provides loans to low- and moderate-income households for home repairs, lead paint abatement, Title 5 upgrades and home improvements. CDBG funds have helped finance the housing rehab loans. Between 1999 and 2001, Montague also had CDBG funds to operate a housing and code enforcement program. The program targeted substandard housing in downtown Turners Falls and Millers Falls.

HRA and RDI have conducted a number of projects in Montague to create and/or upgrade affordable housing. RDI has constructed 18 single-family homes in developments on Kettle Hole Lane in Montague Center, and on Winthrop Street and Birchwood Circle in Millers Falls over the past decade, and 4 homes elsewhere in Turners Falls. Eleven of the 22 homes have deed restrictions to guarantee that they will provide affordable housing to low-income residents for at least 15 years.

Other projects include a comprehensive renovation of the historic Crocker and Cutlery buildings in downtown Turners Falls in 2000. This renovation yielded 48 units of high-quality affordable rental housing, including three wheelchair accessible units. Redevelopment of the historic Moltenbrey building in Turners Falls to upgrade its 26 drug- and alcohol-free single room occupancy apartments is currently under way. The Moltenbrey project will include 2 accessible units and will also upgrade commercial space on the building's first floor.

Habitat for Humanity

In 2003, the national nonprofit organization Habitat for Humanity purchased a dilapidated multi-family apartment building in downtown Turners Falls. The building had been vacant and abandoned for many years, and was condemned by Town officials. Habitat for Humanity demolished the building, and plans to construct three single-family homes on the site. These homes will be sold to low-income families, subject to deed restrictions to ensure that the homes remain affordable in perpetuity. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2004.

Montague Housing Authority

The Montague Housing Authority was established in 1948. The Montague Housing Authority owns and manages four housing complexes in town for low- and moderate-income residents. Sunrise Terrace, Keith Apartments, and Highland School Apartments offer

affordable housing for seniors. Sunrise Terrace has 40 one-bedroom units; Keith Apartments have 25 one-bedroom and 6 two-bedroom units; and Highland School Apartments have 8 one-bedroom and 1 two-bedroom units. Keith Apartments and Highland School both have a few apartments that are barrier-free wheelchair accessible. The Montague Housing Authority also owns Hillcrest Homes. Hillcrest Homes is family-oriented housing, and consists of 30 apartments: 16 two-bedroom units and 14 three-bedrooms units. When it was constructed in the late 1940s, Hillcrest Homes offered subsidized housing for veterans. Today, Hillcrest Homes continues to give preference to veterans, but accepts non-veterans as well. For all of its apartment complexes, the Montague Housing Authority gives preference to local residents. There is currently a waiting list for Montague Housing Authority apartments.

Town of Montague Activities

The Montague Housing Partnership (MHP) was formed in the late 1980s to promote the creation of affordable low- and moderate-income housing in the community. The partnership's members included the Montague Building Inspector and representatives from the Montague Planning Board, Montague Housing Authority and HRA. In 1990, MHP prepared a policy document, Principles and Guidelines for Affordable Housing Developments, that was adopted by the Board of Selectmen in 1992 and continues to be relevant today.

The MHP Principles and Guidelines contain both general recommendations for the development of affordable housing and location-specific guidelines for different types of housing. General recommendations in the guidelines include:

- Promoting the creation of affordable home ownership units;
- Promoting the rehabilitation of existing housing stock;
- Increasing the supply of housing for the elderly and improving maintenance of current elderly housing;
- Allowing accessory apartments;
- Allowing mobile home communities with proper design constraints;
- Maintaining single-room occupancy housing;
- Ensuring careful review of proposals for new rental housing to ensure high quality, good management, availability of services and amenities and consistency with the neighborhoods;
- Supporting housing for residents with disabilities, subject to management plans to ensure quality;

- Supporting housing for Montague's share of the region's homeless population, subject to management plans to ensure quality; and
- Ensuring long-term affordability of housing created with public assistance programs.

The MHP's location-based guidelines divided the Town of Montague into four regions: downtown Turners Falls, the remainder of Turners Falls and all of the other four villages, suburban areas along primary commuter roads, and rural areas. For each region, the guidelines discussed four types of affordable housing projects: conversion of renter-occupied to owner-occupied units, rehabilitation of existing housing, creation of new owner-occupied units, and creation of new renter-occupied units. For each area, the guidelines indicated whether each type of housing project should be encouraged with active Town assistance, considered to be desirable but not a priority for Town support, allowed but not promoted, or discouraged as detrimental to the Town. These guidelines are included in Section 7 of this Housing Plan (on page 7-2).

The MHP Principles and Guidelines informed development of the housing section of the Montague Comprehensive Plan, completed in 1999. The Comprehensive Plan identified four overriding community issues, including: (1) Improving the health of the downtown areas; (2) Retaining and enhancing the vitality of the village areas; (3) Guiding the future of the Montague Plains; and (4) Planning for future capital improvements. All of these concerns relate to housing and housing development. The Plan also included action steps for addressing Montague's key housing issues. These issues include improving substandard housing in the downtown areas, protecting farmland from residential development, meeting future housing needs, and studying Title 5 septic system regulation changes. The Town has made progress on most of these action steps in the five years since the Comprehensive Plan was completed. (The Housing section of the Comprehensive Plan is included in the Appendix of this Housing Plan as a reference).

The Building Inspector and Health Director have worked closely with HRA staff to identify and address substandard housing in Turners Falls and Millers Falls. A full-time housing code inspector, paid with Community Development Block Grant funds between 1999 and 2001, helped address many of the worst violations. Acquisition and restoration of the fire-ravaged shell of the Crocker Bank Building, and the rundown Cutlery Building by RDI resulted in an enormous improvement in the quality of rental housing in downtown Turners Falls. These projects also reduced blight, and have encouraged private investment in the neighborhood.

Zoning changes approved in 1999 provided for high-density housing and mixed commercial and residential uses in downtown areas of Turners Falls, Millers Falls and parts of Montague City. The Montague Planning Board remains committed to revising the zoning in the central village areas of Montague Center and Lake Pleasant to facilitate improvement of existing homes and allow the creation of small businesses.

The Planning Board and Conservation Commission are dedicated to sustaining agricultural and forestry businesses in Montague and promoting the permanent protection of prime farmland. In recent years, the Planning Board has proposed several zoning changes designed

to direct development away from agricultural areas. These changes have been approved by Town Meeting. In 2001, Town Meeting approved the creation of a “Rural Business” zone along Route 63, to promote continued agricultural use, and small business and low-density residential development. In May 2003, the Town created a Back Lot Development Bylaw (Zoning Bylaws, Section 7.8) to encourage the preservation of productive agricultural land by “allowing landowners to develop property that is not valuable for agricultural purposes.” The Back Lot option is available to landowners in the Agricultural Business Overlay District, which “is configured to include those lands which, by virtue of their soils, acreage, location adjacent to and contiguous with other farmland forming discrete blocks, and lack of protection under existing zoning, comprise the critical agricultural areas of the Town of Montague” (Zoning Bylaws, Section 4). The Planning Board is currently drafting additional zoning changes to increase the options available for residential development and to promote the creation of affordable housing.

In 2003, Montague completed its Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Plan contained a comprehensive inventory of the town’s natural, agricultural and recreational resources and an action plan for protecting and maintaining these resources. One concern discussed in the Open Space Plan is the need to protect important natural, agricultural, and recreational assets from residential and other development that could be detrimental to the quality of the resources.

Montague Zoning Regulations for Residential Development

The Town of Montague encourages appropriate residential development through its zoning regulations, which allow different housing types and densities in different sections of town based on each area’s character. Montague has fourteen (14) principal use districts. The zoning districts are shown on the Zoning Map at the back of this section.

Eleven of the town’s 14 zoning districts allow one-family dwellings by right. Two-family dwellings are currently allowed by right in the Neighborhood Business district, and by special permit in most other districts.

Multi-family dwellings of three or more units are allowed by special permit in the General Business, Neighborhood Business, Rural Business and Central Business Districts. In the Rural Business District, multi-family structures are limited to 4 units. In the Central Business District, residential units must be in a mixed-use building, with the street level devoted to commercial use.

The Montague Zoning Bylaws provide a special permit option for the reduction of residential frontage and lot size requirements where public water and sewer are available. The Zoning Board of Appeals regularly grants such requests, which have the effect of promoting affordable housing on small, infill lots in existing neighborhoods. RDI had built several homes on lots subject to special permits under this simple but effective provision of the zoning bylaws.

Montague allows accessory apartments in single-family homes by special permit. To be considered an accessory apartment, a living space must meet all the following criteria: (1) the

space must be less than 700 square feet in area; (2) The space must be smaller than the remaining area of the house; and (3) The space must have only one bedroom.

The standard minimum lot size in Montague for residential development is 22,500 square feet (0.52 acres) for a single-family dwelling, and an additional 22,500 square feet for each additional dwelling unit. Minimum lot sizes in the Agricultural-Forestry Districts AF-2 and AF-4 are 2 and 4 acres respectively, and one acre in Rural Business and the Water Supply Protection Overlay District. In 1999, the Town revised the zoning bylaws to allow increased density in the Central Business (CB) and Neighborhood Business (NB) Districts to encourage greater residential development in those areas. In the CB and NB Districts, the minimum lot size is now 10,000 square feet for a single-family dwelling and 15,000 square feet for a two-family dwelling.

In 2001, Montague created an Historic Industrial District. The purpose of the district is to “encourage adaptive reuse of historic industrial buildings and sites” (Montague Zoning Bylaws, Section 5.2.12). The district provides for residential uses by special permit.

As already discussed, there have been a number of recent changes to the Zoning Bylaws to encourage affordable housing development. The Planning Board is currently drafting additional zoning changes to further promote affordable housing and to increase residential development options.

Montague’s Zoning Bylaws offer considerable flexibility for future housing development. Single-family structures are allowed by right in most areas and minimum lot sizes in many districts are smaller than in most surrounding towns. The bylaws facilitate the construction of higher housing densities in downtown areas, and the reuse of historic downtown structures for residential uses, as appropriate. The bylaws have a provision for accessory apartments, which allows for more housing units to be created within existing residential buildings. Accessory apartments also offer homeowners an additional potential source of income, and give renters a new affordable housing option. The town’s zoning bylaws also help promote the preservation of open space and farmland through the Back Lot Development Bylaw and through lower densities in rural areas.

Montague Zoning Map

(to be inserted)

Map of Turners Falls boundaries used for the following sections on housing and population characteristics

(to be inserted)

SECTION 2

CURRENT HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

This section summarizes Montague's current housing characteristics, including housing types and age of units, tenancy, new construction trends and vacancies. The section also compares housing statistics for Montague to those for Franklin County and for the State of Massachusetts. The information presented in this section primarily comes from the U.S. Census. The Census information has been supplemented with data from the Montague Building Inspector and Montague Assessors. Because of the variations in housing characteristics and trends in different sections of Montague, separate statistics are presented for Turners Falls compared to the other areas of Montague in cases where there are large differences.

Housing Supply

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Montague has a total of approximately 3,850 housing units. An estimated 55% of the housing units are located in Turners Falls; the other 45% are divided between Montague's other villages and rural areas.³

Montague experienced a moderate amount of housing growth over the last two decades. U.S. Census figures indicate that between 1980 and 2000, the number of housing units in Montague increased by 13% or 450 units (see Table 2-1). Most of the new homes during this period were constructed outside of the downtown areas of Turners Falls and Millers Falls.

Between 1980 and 2000, Montague had less housing growth than Franklin County and Massachusetts overall. Over the twenty years, the number of homes in Franklin County and the State grew by approximately one-fifth (19%).

Table 2-1: Housing Units in Montague, 1980 to 2000, Comparison to the County and State

Area	Number of Housing Units			Percentage Change		
	1980	1990	2000	1980-1990	1990-2000	1980-2000
Montague	3,391	3,695	3,844	+8.9%	+4.0%	+13.4%
Franklin County	26,832	30,394	31,939	+13.3%	+5.1%	+19.0%
Massachusetts	2,208,146	2,472,711	2,621,989	+12.0%	+6.0%	+18.7%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, *Census of Population & Housing, 1980, 1990, and 2000*.

³ The U.S. Census Bureau defines Turners Falls to include both the downtown area and the neighborhood known locally as "the Hill." The boundaries of Turners Falls used for the Census data presented in the Housing Plan, are shown on the map on page 1-13. Unfortunately, the Census Bureau defines Millers Falls to include parts of both Montague and Erving. The Census data for Millers Falls were consequently not incorporated into this Plan. The Census Bureau offers little information by neighborhood for other sections of Montague. As a result, in the Housing Plan, sub-town level Census information is typically presented only for Montague as a whole, for Turners Falls, and for Montague outside of Turners Falls.

Types of Housing

Montague has a diverse housing stock, with a mix of single-family homes, duplexes, multi-unit structures, and mobile homes (see Table 2-2). Approximately 55% of the town's 3,850 housing units are single-family homes, 17% (636 units) are in two-family homes, and 26% (1,005 units) are in multi-family structures with three housing units or more.

The housing stock in Montague is much more diverse than in most other communities in Franklin County. In many Franklin County towns, 75-80% of the housing units are single-family homes and only 5-10% are in multi-unit buildings. Most of Montague's multi-family housing stock (80%) is located in Turners Falls.

Table 2-2: Types of Housing Structures in Montague, 2000

Structure Type	Montague Entire Town		Turners Falls		Montague Outside of Turners Falls	
	Housing Units	Percent of Total	Housing Units	Percent of Total	Housing Units	Percent of Total
Single unit (includes condos)	2,120	55.2%	942	44.1%	1,178	68.9%
Two unit building	636	16.5%	381	17.9%	255	14.9%
3-4 unit building	376	9.8%	284	13.3%	92	5.4%
5-9 unit building	351	9.1%	274	12.8%	77	4.5%
10 or more unit building	278	7.2%	241	11.3%	37	2.2%
Mobile home	83	2.2%	12	0.6%	71	4.2%
Total Units	3,844	100.0%	2,134	100.0%	1,710	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

Housing Tenancy

Tenancy refers to whether a house is occupied by a renter or homeowner. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the majority of Montague's housing units are owner-occupied. Town-wide, 57% (2,194 units) are inhabited by owners, and 37% (1,422 units) by renters. (The remaining 6% of housing units are vacant.)

Montague's percentage of rental housing is among the highest in Franklin County towns. Only Greenfield and Sunderland have more; 44% and 54% of the housing units respectively in these communities are renter-occupied.

Table 2-3: Housing Tenancy in Montague, 2000

Housing Tenancy	Montague Entire Town		Turners Falls		Montague Outside of Turners Falls	
	Housing Units	Percent of Total	Housing Units	Percent of Total	Housing Units	Percent of Total
Owner-occupied	2,194	57.1%	1,007	47.2%	1,187	69.4%
Renter-occupied	1,422	37.0%	973	45.6%	449	26.3%
Total Occupied*	3,616	94.1%	1,980	92.8%	1,636	95.7%
Vacant	228	5.9%	154	7.3%	74	4.3%
Total Housing Units	3,844	100.0%	2,134	100.0%	1,710	100.0%

* Only housing units that have year-round residents are considered occupied. The Census Bureau considers housing units that have seasonal or occasional residents to be vacant.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population & Housing, 2000.

Within Montague, the percentage of renters and owners varies significantly between Turners Falls and the other areas of town (Table 2-3). In 2000, renters occupied an estimated 46% of the housing units in Turners Falls and 27% of the housing elsewhere.

Table 2-4: Housing Tenancy and Occupancy in Montague, 1990 and 2000

	Number of Housing Units		Change 1990-2000	
	1990	2000	Units	Percentage
Owner-Occupied	2,086	2,194	+108	+5.2%
Renter-Occupied	1,393	1,422	+29	+2.1%
Total Occupied (Households)*	3,479	3,616	+137	+3.9%

*A household occupies one housing unit. Only housing units that have year-round residents are considered occupied. The Census Bureau considers housing units that have seasonal or occasional residents to be vacant.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population & Housing, 1990 and 2000.

As shown in Table 2-4, between 1990 and 2000, the number of occupied housing units in Montague increased by 137 units (4%). The increase included 108 new owner-occupied units and 29 rental units. Most of the growth occurred outside of Turners Falls and Millers Falls.

Most of the rental housing in Montague is in multi-unit structures, in comparison to the owner-occupied housing, which mostly consists of single-family homes. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 86% of Montague homeowners live in single-family homes, and 9% live in buildings with two to four units (Table 2-5). In comparison, the majority of renter households (55%) reside in structures with five units or more.

Table 2-5: Montague Housing Structures by Tenancy, 2000

Structure Type	Owner-Occupied*		Renter-Occupied*		Vacant/Seasonal*	
	Housing Units	Percent of Total	Housing Units	Percent of Total	Housing Units	Percent of Total
Single unit	1,887	86.0%	181	12.7%	52	22.8%
Two unit building	174	7.9%	430	30.2%	32	14.0%
3-4 unit building	32	1.5%	302	21.2%	42	18.4%
5 or more unit building	47	2.1%	487	34.2%	95	41.7%
Mobile home	54	2.5%	22	1.5%	7	3.1%
Total Units	2,194	100.0%	1,422	100.0%	228	100.0%

A household occupies one housing unit. Only housing units that have year-round residents are considered occupied.

The Census Bureau considers housing units that have seasonal or occasional residents to be vacant.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population & Housing, 2000.

Housing Vacancies

The Census Bureau characterizes as “vacant” any residence that does not have a full-time occupant, even if the residence is used as a second home or vacation home. According to the U.S. Census, in 2000, Montague had 228 vacant housing units. These vacant units included 23 units with seasonal or occasional residents, 61 unoccupied units for rent, 35 unoccupied units for sale, and 11 units that had been rented or sold but which had no one living in them. The remaining 98 vacant units were likely uninhabitable or undergoing renovation.

As indicated in Table 2-3 and Table 2-5 above, many of Montague’s vacant housing units are located in Turners Falls and are in multi-unit buildings. A number of these structures are in poor condition and in need of upgrade and repairs, or in a few cases, demolition. The vacant multi-unit housing count for 2000 may include apartments in the Crocker, Cutlery Buildings and Moltenbrey buildings, as well as in a multifamily structure demolished by Habitat for Humanity in 2003. The Crocker and Cutlery Buildings have since been renovated, and improvements to the Moltenbrey are currently under way. The Town of Montague is committed to improving the quality of its older housing stock, especially through the rehabilitation and replacement of abandoned and substandard housing units.

The Census Bureau calculates vacancy rates for towns based on the number of homes and rental units that could be available for new residents to live in year-round. These vacancy rates exclude residences that have seasonal or occasional occupants, as well as homes that are uninhabitable, and homes that have been sold or rented, but remain unoccupied. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the homeowner vacancy rate in Montague is 0.8% and the rental vacancy rate is 5.4%. A healthy housing market is generally considered to have vacancy rates of 2-3% for owner-occupied homes and 4-5% for rental properties. Two factors that could be contributing to Montague’s low homeowner unit vacancy rate are Montague’s relatively inexpensive housing sales prices compared to surrounding towns, and the lack of developable parcels in the villages. Montague’s slightly elevated rental housing vacancy rate could be related to the need to upgrade some of the rental housing stock.

Housing Age

Much of Montague's housing stock was built before World War II. This is true particularly for homes in Turners Falls. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, about 48% of the housing units in Turners Falls were constructed before 1940 (see Table 2-6). Outside of Turners Falls, 35% of housing units were constructed during that period, many of them in Millers Falls. As was mentioned earlier, most of the residential construction in recent years has taken place outside of the downtown sections of Turners and Millers Falls, primarily along major roadways and in rural areas of Montague Center.

One potential issue with older homes is exposure to lead paint. Before 1950, and even until the late 1970s in some places, the use of lead paint was widespread. For example, it has been estimated that between 1960 and 1975, lead-based paints were still used in 20% of homes nationwide. Exposure to lead paint can contribute to developmental disabilities and other health problems in young children. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) screens children up to age six for lead paint poisoning. Massachusetts law requires all children to be screened before they can enroll in kindergarten. The DPH statistics for 2001 show that none of the 210 children screened in Montague during that year had elevated blood lead levels.

Table 2-6: Age of Housing Structures in Montague, 2000

Housing Structure Type	Montague Entire Town		Turners Falls		Outside of Turners Falls	
	Units	Percent of Total	Units	Percent of Total	Units	Percent of Total
1999 to March 2000	36	0.9%	0	0.0%	36	2.1%
1990 to 1998	235	6.1%	53	2.5%	182	10.6%
1980 to 1989	317	8.2%	83	3.9%	234	13.7%
1960 to 1979	813	21.1%	373	17.5%	440	25.7%
1940 to 1959	819	21.3%	597	28.0%	222	13.0%
1939 or earlier	1,624	42.2%	1,028	48.2%	596	34.9%
Total Units	3,844	100.0%	2,134	100.0%	1,710	100.0%
Median Year Built	1948		1942		1962	

Note: the numbers presented here may vary from those in Table 2-1 because Table 2-1 uses Census data collected from 100% of respondents, and this table uses information collected from only a sample of respondents. The housing age data shown here are based on information provided directly by respondents regarding the age of their homes. These data show similar construction trends to those indicated by the records of the Montague Building Inspector (and provided in Table 2-7).

A related issue is that often older houses are in worse condition and have more potential problems than new homes. Potential problems including code violations and structure deterioration. Older houses frequently offer the most affordable housing option, especially for low- and moderate-income families. As a result, low- and moderate-income families are the most likely to live in older homes, and face the health and safety issues associated with these homes, with few resources to address them.

Montague's rental housing stock is older than the town's owner-occupied housing. The U.S. Census estimates the median year of construction for rental housing in Montague as 1942. In

comparison, the median year of construction for owner-occupied units is 1954. According to the U.S. Census, almost half (48%) of the town's renter-occupied housing was built before 1940, compared to approximately one-third (36%) of owner-occupied housing (See Appendix Table A-1 for more data on housing age by tenancy).

New Construction

Comparisons of the 1990 and 2000 Census data on housing type show that the number and percentage of single-family homes in Montague grew during the 1990s. Building permit data from the Montague Building Inspector show the same trends. Overall, between 1990 and 2000, building permits were issued for 203 new single-family homes. A few duplexes and multi-family units were built over the same period. Table 2-7 provides a summary of new single-family home construction in Montague during the past six years (1998-2003 inclusive). Over this time period, building permits were issued for 90 single-family homes. More than half of these homes (52%) are located in Montague Center or surrounding rural areas, and slightly more than a quarter (28%) are in Turners Falls.

Table 2-7: Authorized New Single-Family Homes in Montague, 1998 to 2003

Year	Townwide	Turners Falls	Millers Falls	Montague Center	Montague City	Lake Pleasant
2003	7	1	2	3	1	0
2002	16	6	0	10	0	0
2001	13	3	1	8	1	0
2000	14	3	3	7	1	0
1999	25	7	2	15	0	0
1998	15	5	6	4	0	0
Total	90	25	14	47	3	0
Percent of Townwide Total in Each Area	100.0%	27.8%	15.6%	52.2%	3.3%	0.0%

Source: Montague Building Inspector, data compiled by the Montague Town Planner, 2004.

During the period between 1998 and 2003, there were also four building permits issued for additional housing units (such as accessory apartments) in existing homes. Three of the four permits were for new units in single-family homes in Montague Center; the fourth was for an additional apartment in Turners Falls.

A number of the building permits issued since 1990 have been for Rural Development Inc. (RDI) new affordable single-family homes. The RDI projects on Winthrop Street and Birchwood Circle in Millers Falls resulted in 13 new single-family homes, and the project on Kettle Hole Lane in Montague Center added 5 new single-family homes. RDI has also built 4 single-family homes in Turners Falls. The RDI homes are sold to low-income households, and approximately half of the homes have deed restrictions to guarantee that they will remain affordable to low-income residents for at least 15 years.

Current Housing Characteristics

Substandard Housing

Census indicators of “substandard” housing include overcrowding (defined as more than one occupant per room), or a lack of complete plumbing or kitchen facilities.⁴ The Census Bureau does not collect information relative to the physical condition of housing. The Census statistics suggest that few Montague residents live in severely overcrowded or substandard housing. According to the U.S. Census, in 2000, only 17 (0.8%) owner-occupied housing units and 22 (1.5%) occupied rental units in Montague had overcrowding. None of the occupied housing units lacked complete kitchen facilities, and 13 units (0.3%), all rentals, lacked complete plumbing facilities. Among the town’s 228 vacant housing units, 36 units lacked complete plumbing and 36 lacked full kitchens, suggesting that some of the town’s vacant housing is not habitable. More than 80% of the units without full plumbing or/and full kitchens were in Turners Falls.

As mentioned earlier, in recent years, the Town of Montague, working with HRA, has made a focused effort to renovate and replace substandard housing in town. Substandard, dilapidated housing, especially in the downtown areas, has been identified as a key issue in Montague. In some cases, substandard housing conditions remain unreported because occupants are afraid of being evicted if they report problems, and of being unable to find other housing they can afford.

⁴ The U.S. Census Bureau defines complete plumbing as including: (1) hot and cold piped water; (2) a flush toilet; and (3) a bathtub or shower. All three facilities must be located in the housing unit. Complete kitchen facilities are defined as including: (1) a sink with piped water; (2) a range or cook top and oven; and (3) a refrigerator. All three must be located in the housing unit, but need not be in the same room (U.S. Census Bureau, Technical Documentation 2000 Census, 2002).

SECTION 3

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS THAT INFLUENCE HOUSING DEMAND

This section examines population characteristics that influence housing demand. These characteristics include population size, household size, age distribution, disabilities and other special needs. This section also discusses potential housing needs, both for Montague's population in general and for particular population segments, such as seniors and low-income families with young children.

Total Population

General population figures and growth trends for Montague for the past two decades are presented in Table 3-1. According to the U.S. Census, Montague's population in 2000 stood at 8,489. Overall, between 1980 and 2000, the town's total population grew by approximately 6% (478 people). Over the twenty-year period, Montague's population grew at a slower rate than Franklin County and Massachusetts, both of which saw population increases of 11%.

Table 3-1: Population for Montague 1980 to 2000, Comparison to the County and State

Area	Total Population			Percentage Change		
	1980	1990	2000	1980-1990	1990-2000	1980-2000
Montague	8,011	8,155	8,489	+1.8%	+4.1%	+6.0%
Franklin County	64,317	70,092	71,535	+9.0%	+2.1%	+11.2%
Massachusetts	5,737,037	6,016,425	6,349,097	+4.9%	+5.5%	+10.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population & Housing, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

The 2000 Census collected information on housing turnover and whether residents were living in the same house in 1995 and in 2000. Over half (56%) of the population in Turners Falls (ages 5 and up) resided in the same home in 1995 and 2000, as did 60% of Montague population outside of Turners Falls. These percentages are comparable to the Franklin County (61%) and Massachusetts (58%) turnover levels. The Census Bureau does not gather data regarding the turnover in rental properties versus owner-occupied housing. However, it is expected that the turnover rate for rental units would be higher than that for owner-occupied homes.

Households

The number of households is more important than total population size for determining housing need. A household is generally defined as an individual or group of people living in one housing unit. Changes in the number of households therefore reflect not only changes in population, but also societal shifts that influence average household size.

Nationally, average household size is decreasing. The reduction in people per household is occurring for a variety of reasons. These reasons include a decrease in the average number of children per family and an increase in the number of single-parent households. Other factors are that families today are more mobile and more spread out than in the past, and that more adults now live by themselves. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 32% of Montague households (1,152 households) consist of one person. These one-person households include 489 elderly adults age 65 and over. Approximately 70% of Montague's elderly single-person households are in Turners Falls. These single-person elderly households include seniors living by themselves, and seniors residing in congregate housing or elderly-specific apartments.

Table 3-2 shows the average household size in Montague in 1980, 1990, and 2000. The table indicates that the average household size in Montague decreased an estimated 9% between 1980 and 2000, declining from 2.58 to 2.35. During the same period, Franklin County and the State experienced similar declines in household size (8% each).

Table 3-2: Average Household Size in Montague, 1980 to 2000, Comparison to the County and State

Area	Average Number of Persons Per Household			Percentage Change		
	1980	1990	2000	1980-1990	1990-2000	1980-2000
Montague	2.58	2.34	2.35	-9.3%	+0.4%	-8.6%
Franklin County	2.65	2.54	2.43	-4.2%	-4.3%	-8.3%
Massachusetts	2.82	2.68	2.60	-5.0%	-3.0%	-7.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population & Housing, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

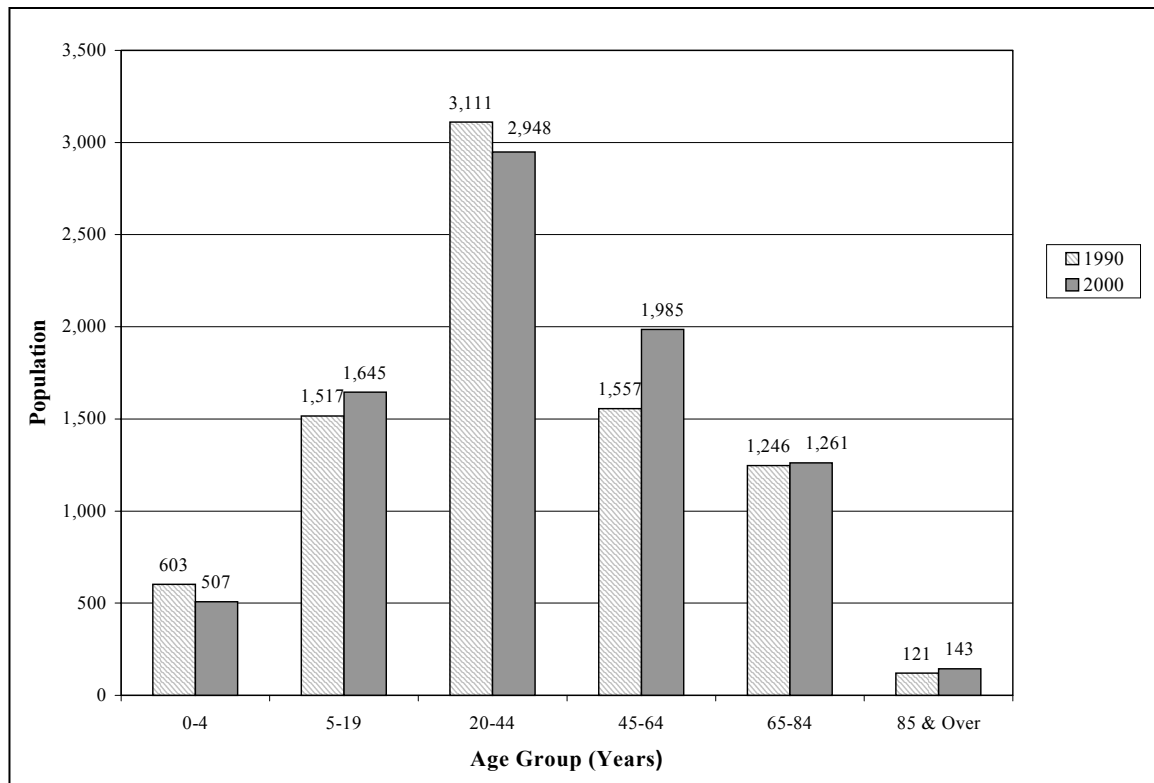
There is some variation in household size between Montague's homeowner and renter households, with rental households having slightly fewer people on average. In 2000, the average household size for homeowners was 2.37 people compared to an average of 2.21 people among renters. Most of this difference is related to the kinds of households that typically rent. Renters are most likely to be young or elderly, and tend to have the smallest households. For example, the Census Bureau reported that in 2000, 93% of Montague households with a householder (defined as the head of household) under age 25 rented their housing (see Appendix Table A-4 for more info on tenancy by householder age). Additionally, many of the households in both age groups consist of people living by themselves.

Population Distribution by Age Group

One demographic factor that can affect housing demand is the age distribution of the population, and how it is changing over time. Different age groups have different housing needs. The population distribution for Montague in 1990 and 2000 is shown in Figure 3-1. Table 3-3 shows the population distribution figures for Montague, Franklin County, and Massachusetts for the same years. The information on the town's population by age group comes from the Census Bureau.

Between 1990 and 2000, the largest population increase in Montague occurred for residents in the 45-64 age group. This increase was driven by the aging of the baby boomer generation (born 1946-1964) who began turning 45 in 1991. The largest population decrease was for adults ages 20 to 44, due to the shift into the next age bracket. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of young people under age 20 in Montague stayed about the same.

Figure 3-1: Population Distribution by Age Group in Montague, 1990 and 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Census of Population and Housing, 1990 and 2000*.

The 1990 and 2000 population distribution by age group for Montague was similar to that for Franklin County and Massachusetts (see Table 3-3). One notable difference is the higher percentage of elderly residents (ages 65 and over) in Montague, which likely reflects the availability of affordable housing and services for seniors in the community.

Table 3-3: Population Distribution in Montague, 1990 and 2000, Comparison to the County and State

Age Group	Population Distribution (% of total population in each age group)					
	1990			2000		
	Montague	Franklin County	State	Montague	Franklin County	State
Under Age 5	7.7%	7.3%	7.0%	6.0%	5.2%	6.3%
Ages 5-19	18.8%	19.8%	18.9%	19.4%	20.7%	20.1%
Ages 20-44	39.2%	40.9%	42.1%	34.7%	34.0%	37.7%
Ages 45-64	17.8%	17.5%	18.4%	23.4%	25.9%	22.4%
Ages 65-84	15.0%	12.8%	12.0%	14.9%	12.3%	11.7%
Ages 85 & Over	1.5%	1.6%	1.5%	1.7%	1.9%	1.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 and 2000.

Populations with Special Housing Needs

Population groups that may have special housing needs and that may have the most difficulty finding suitable, affordable housing include the elderly and families with young children. In particular, seniors and families with young children can benefit from housing with good access to services, including stores, health care and community facilities and programs. Another issue facing the elderly and families with young children is that they often have limited or fixed incomes.

Table 3-4: Household Types in Montague and Franklin County, 2000

Household Type	Town of Montague		Franklin County
	Number of Households	Percent of All Households	Percent of All Households
Married-couple family*	1,604	44.3%	48.7%
With children under 18	661	18.3%	20.8%
With no children under 18	943	26.1%	27.9%
Family* with female householder, no husband present	507	14.0%	10.2%
With children under 18	353	9.8%	6.7%
With no children under 18	154	4.3%	3.5%
Family* with male householder, no wife present	127	3.5%	3.9%
With children under 18	60	1.7%	2.2%
With no children under 18	67	1.9%	1.6%
1-person household	1,148	31.7%	29.0%
Householder 65 years of age or older	489	13.5%	10.7%
Householder under 65 years of age	659	18.2%	18.3%
Unrelated (non-family) households*	231	6.4%	8.2%
Total Households	3,617	100.0%	100.0%

*The Census Bureau defines a family as including "a householder [head of household] and one or more people living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption."

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

Residents Living in Poverty

Poverty in Montague is the most prevalent among single-parent households and children. According to the U.S. Census, in 1999, 13.9% of Montague families (158 families) with children under age 18 lived below the poverty level; 109 of these families were headed by a single parent.

Overall, 13% of Montague residents (1,100 people) lived below the poverty line in 1999. Three-quarters (75%) of these impoverished residents lived in Turners Falls. In Turners Falls, the poverty rate is 18.9%. In comparison, in the rest of Montague, the poverty rate is 6.9%, and in Franklin County, the poverty rate is 9.4%.

Table 3-5: Population Living in Poverty in Turners Falls, by Age and Household Type, 1999

Age and Household Types	Income Above Poverty Level	Income Below Poverty Level	Total Population With Known Poverty Status	Percent Below Poverty Level
Total Population by Age Group				
under age 5	209	76	285	26.7%
age 5 to 17	478	199	677	29.4%
age 18 to 64	2,015	463	2,478	18.7%
age 65 to 74	386	48	434	11.1%
age 75 or over	423	31	454	6.8%
Total Population	3,511	817	4,328	18.9%
Population Under Age 65				
in married-couple families*	1,608	103	1,711	6.0%
in family* with male householder no wife present	138	83	221	37.6%
in family* with female householder, no husband present	555	332	887	37.4%
in non-family households (unrelated individuals living together and one-person households)	401	220	621	35.4%
Total Under Age 65	2,702	738	3,440	21.5%
Population Age 65 or Over				
in married-couple families*	463	13	476	2.7%
in family* with male householder no wife present	15	0	15	0.0%
in family* with female householder, no husband present	39	17	56	30.4%
in non-family households (unrelated individuals living together and one-person households)	292	49	341	14.4%
Total Age 65 or Over	809	79	888	8.9%

*The Census Bureau defines a family as including "a householder [head of household] and one or more people living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption."

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Census of Population and Housing*, 2000.

Additional poverty statistics for Turners Falls are shown in Table 3-5. In 1999, 817 Turners Falls residents were living in poverty. An estimated one-third (33%) of residents living in poverty were under age 18, and 90% were under age 65. An estimated 275 children or 29%

of the Turners Falls population under age 18 lived in poverty. This was a higher poverty rate than that for residents ages 18 to 64 (19% poverty) and for residents ages 65 and over (9%).

Table 3-5 also indicates that poverty rates were much higher among single-parent families than among married-couple families. People living in married-couple families had an average poverty rate of 5.3%. In contrast, the poverty rate averaged 36.6% for single-parent headed households and 28.0% for non-family households. Non-family households include people living alone and unrelated individuals living together.

The Census data suggest that among Montague's poorest residents, the housing needs are the greatest for single-parent households with children, and for non-family households. It is essential that the town continue to work to provide affordable housing options for these residents. Individuals and families with incomes below the poverty level have great difficulty finding suitable housing they can afford. (Housing affordability in Montague by age group and income is discussed more under "Housing Costs and Affordability" in the next chapter).

Residents with Disabilities

The U.S. Census provides basic data on the prevalence of disabilities. Unfortunately, these data include little information regarding the severity of disabilities. As with most Census data, information on disabilities is self-reported by Census survey respondents.

Data on disabilities among Montague residents are presented in Table 3-6. The table excludes people living in institutionalized settings, such as group homes or nursing homes. In 2000, Montague had 117 such residents. Overall, an estimated 20% of Montague's population age 5 and over, and 44% of Montague's elderly (age 65 and over) have a disability of some type. In comparison, an estimated 18% of the Franklin County population age 5 and over, and 38% of the County's elderly population have a disability.

The primary disabilities reported among Montague's elderly population are physical disabilities that affect mobility (experienced by 63%), and sensory disabilities, such as vision and hearing impairments (44%). In 2000, a total of 906 cases of disabilities in Montague involved either physical limitations, self-care limitations, or both. If it is arbitrarily assumed that 10-15% of the population with physical and/or self-care disabilities potentially requires some form of modified or accessible housing, then the potential demand for accessible housing may range from 90 to 135 units. It is likely that a percentage of this population already resides in housing that has been modified to accommodate special needs.

Table 3-6: Disabilities in the Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population in Montague, 2000

Age Group				Types of Disability (Number of people)*			
	Total Population	Number with Disabilities	Percent with Disabilities	Sensory Disability	Physical Disability	Mental Disability	Self-Care Disability
Age 5-15	1,207	90	7.5%	0	0	90	0
Age 16-64	5,265	911	17.3%	163	345	254	104
Age 65 & Over	1,363	596	43.7%	263	374	90	83
Total Age 5 & Over**	7,835	1,597	20.4%	426	719	434	187

*One person can have multiple disabilities and can be counted in more than one disability category.

**The Census Bureau does not track disabilities in children under age 5.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

The Citizen's Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) maintains a statewide list of housing with accessible units. This list primarily includes housing that was constructed or rehabbed using federal or state subsidies. Little information is available on privately-owned accessible housing. Only two apartment buildings in Montague are included in CHAPA's listing: the Power Town Apartments on Avenue A and Park Villa Apartments on Turnpike Road in Turners Falls.

Additionally, many of the residential buildings managed by the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority and the Montague Housing Authority have some barrier-free, wheelchair accessible units. These buildings include the Crocker Building, the Winslow Wentworth House, Keith Apartments, and the Highland School. HRA reports that sometimes its barrier-free units end up going to people who do not need special accommodations because otherwise the units would remain unoccupied.

Montague has a housing rehabilitation program that offers loans to low- and moderate-income households for housing repairs and renovations, including accessibility improvements. This program is funded with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) monies and administered by the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority. Another potential source of funding for accessibility improvements is the Farmers Home 504 Program, which offers low-interest loans for accessibility modifications to low-income elderly and handicapped residents. The Stavros Center for Independent Living and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission sometimes also have funds available.

The Montague Building Inspector reports that in recent years, he has seen an increase in requests for building permits to construct wheelchair ramps and make other accessibility improvements. As Montague's population becomes older over the next few decades, mirroring state and national trends, it is expected that the demand for accessible housing will grow.

Students at Area Colleges and Other Post-Secondary Schools

College and other post-secondary students are another population with special housing needs. Students are typically young and living on limited incomes. They are also transient, and frequently require housing only during the academic year, approximately September 1–May 30.

The largest population of students living in Montague is enrolled at the Hallmark Institute of Photography, a private post-secondary educational institution located in the Turners Falls Airport Industrial Park. Hallmark offers a 10-month program in professional photography. In 2003, program enrollment was approximately 150 students. All of these students are currently housed off-campus, mainly in the village of Turners Falls. Finding quality, affordable housing for its students near the school has been a challenge for Hallmark. Also, the school is looking to expand its facilities and enrollment. Hallmark is currently considering the construction of dedicated housing for approximately 140 students near the campus. The school intends to continue to house its other students in the community.

The University of Massachusetts at Amherst (UMass) is located approximately 12 miles from the Town of Montague. UMass has a chronic housing shortage. The University has a total population of more than 24,000 graduate and undergraduate students, and provides housing for less than 50% of its student body, leaving more than 12,000 students to find their own housing in the area.⁵ As a result, many UMass students live off-campus. While there are no statistics on the number of UMass students living in Montague, it is reasonable to assume that this number may be significant given the proximity of the Town to campus and the relative affordability of rental housing in Montague.

Greenfield Community College (GCC) students also have an effect on Montague's housing. Montague is close to Greenfield, and there is frequent transit service between Turners Falls and Greenfield.

The impact of students on Montague's housing supply is complex. According to the UMass Housing Resource Center, which helps students find off-campus housing, most students are seeking rentals in the \$400-\$500 range. Students likely compete with other low-income populations for rental housing in Montague. On the other hand, many students are willing to rent rooms in private homes. The availability of students as housemates may make homeownership more affordable for households with low or moderate incomes and extra living space. Such households could include elderly residents living alone, and married couples whose children are no longer living at home.

⁵ Ayers Saint Gross Architects, "Comparing Campuses" website, www.asg-architects.com/fs_comparing.html

SECTION

4

HOUSING COSTS AND AFFORDABILITY

This section explores the cost of housing in Montague for renters and owners and the degree to which housing is affordable to households of different incomes. One of the main goals of Executive Order 418 is to encourage the creation of new affordable housing units for people across a range of incomes, including low, middle, and moderate incomes.

Housing is generally defined to be “affordable” when households spend no more than 30% of gross income on housing costs. For renters, housing costs include rent and utilities, such as hot water, electricity, and heat. For homeowners, housing costs include mortgage principal, mortgage interest, mortgage insurance, property taxes and property insurance. Households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing are considered to be “cost-burdened.”

Data on housing costs show that housing in Montague is affordable for most residents, but that some residents, especially low-income residents, may be cost-burdened by their housing expenditures.

The housing costs described here, reported in the 2000 U.S. Census, may differ from market-rate home and rental prices. There are a number of explanations for this. Market-rate prices reflect only what is being charged to new homeowners and renters, not the housing costs for households that have lived in the same dwelling for a long-term. For example, rents for long-term tenants are often well below the rents charged to new tenants. In addition, a key limitation of the Census information is that it is only updated every 10 years, and therefore does not reflect recent changes in the housing market and in housing-related costs, such as rising property taxes. Although it becomes somewhat dated over the decade, the U.S. Census still represents the most reliable available information concerning overall housing costs in the community. When available, more recent rents and housing prices are presented in this section.

Housing Costs

This section presents information on owner and renter housing costs in Montague, and on these costs relative to household income. The data presented here are from the 2000 U.S. Census, and reflect the costs of all housing in the community, not just the housing that is available for sale or rent. According to the 2000 Census, Montague has among the lowest rents in Franklin County (5th lowest median rent of 26 towns) and home prices below the county average.

The 2000 Census estimated monthly housing costs for 1,689 owner-occupied homes in Montague. Homeowner costs can vary considerably depending on whether or not the home is mortgaged. For example, the median monthly total housing cost for homes without

mortgages was \$330, and the median total cost for homes with mortgages was \$892, 2.7 times greater. Similarly, it was estimated that 86% of homes without mortgages had monthly costs under \$400 compared to fewer than 5% of mortgaged homes (More information on monthly homeowner costs, including costs in Turners Falls, is contained in Appendix Table A-7).

Since 2000, housing prices in Montague have increased considerably. This trend is discussed later in this section. Property taxes have also risen. Between 2000 and 2003, the average annual property tax for a single-family home in Montague rose \$564, an increase of 35%. The rising housing prices and increased taxes are leading to higher housing costs overall for town residents.

For rental housing, the 2000 Census estimated the monthly expenditures for 1,356 rental units in Montague, and found the town's median rental housing costs to be \$491 per month. Estimated total housing costs for rental housing in Montague ranged from under \$200 to \$1,250 or more. In Turners Falls, 67% of the rental units had costs of \$500 or less, compared to 18% outside of Turners Falls. The median rental housing costs outside of Turners Falls were \$634 per month, with almost 20% of the rental housing costing at least \$800 per month (More information on monthly rental housing costs is contained in Appendix Table A-8).

Recent rent data suggest that the 2000 U.S. Census significantly underestimates current rental prices. Table 4-1 shows the current average monthly rents by bedroom size for apartments participating in the federal Section 8 program. The rents for Section 8-eligible apartments may vary somewhat from rental prices overall. However, general rents are hard to estimate and obtain. The rents for the Section 8-eligible apartments are discussed here because they are the best available current data.

Table 4-1: Average Monthly Rents by Bedroom Size, for Apartments Participating in the Federal Section 8 Program, 2004

Bedroom Size	Turners Falls		Montague Outside of Turners Falls & Millers Falls*	
	Average Gross Rent**	Average Contract Rent	Average Gross Rent**	Average Contract Rent
No bedrooms (studio apartment)	\$494	\$407	---	---
1 bedroom	\$571	\$506	\$614	\$444
2 bedrooms	\$702	\$607	\$856	\$650
3 bedrooms	\$864	\$682	\$868	\$746
4 bedrooms	\$1,050	\$799	---	---
5 bedrooms	\$1,342	\$1,080	---	---

*This area includes Montague Center, Lake Pleasant, and Montague City. No data were available for the Montague section of Millers Falls specifically.

**Gross rent includes estimated utilities; contract rent is only the paid rent.

The rents shown are the market rental prices without the Section 8 subsidy. A Section 8 voucher entitles the voucher holder to reduced rents of less than 40% of full-market price.

Source: Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, 2004.

As indicated in Table 4-1, the average gross rent (rent plus utilities) in Turners Falls is currently \$571 for a one-bedroom apartment, \$702 for a two-bedroom, and \$864 for a three-bedroom. The average prices in Montague outside of Turners Falls are even higher. The rents in the table represent market prices, not reduced rents due to a Section subsidy (Section 8 vouchers entitle the voucher holder to pay reduced rents of less than 40% of market price.)

Housing Values

The Census Bureau gathers data on housing values by asking owners what they believe their homes, including land, to be worth in the current real estate market. Table 4-2 contains data on housing values reported in the 2000 Census. According to this information, in 2000, 35% of the town's owner-occupied homes were valued under \$100,000, and another 47% were valued between \$100,000 and \$150,000. On the high end, 46 homes (0.8%) had values above \$300,000.

Table 4-2: Housing Values for Owner-Occupied Homes in Montague, 2000

Estimated Housing Value (Owner-reported)	Montague Entire Town		Turners Falls		Montague Outside of Turners Falls	
	Number of Homes	Percent of Total	Number of Homes	Percent of Total	Number of Homes	Percent of Total
Under \$50,000	86	3.9%	28	2.8%	58	5.0%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	691	31.5%	391	38.8%	300	26.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1,030	46.9%	479	47.6%	551	47.9%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	260	11.9%	72	7.1%	188	16.3%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	81	3.7%	28	2.8%	53	4.6%
\$300,000 or more	46	2.1%	9	0.9%	37	3.1%
Total with Estimated Value	2,194	100.0%	1,007	100.0%	1,187	100.0%
Average Housing Value	\$125,400		\$120,400		\$129,700	

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, *Census of Population and Housing, 2000*.

Housing prices are lower in Turners Falls than in the other parts of town. The average owner-occupied housing value in Turners Falls in 2000 was \$120,400 compared to \$129,700 elsewhere in Montague. Expectedly, the lowest priced area outside of Turners Falls is Millers Falls, in part because of its older housing stock.

Residential Sales

The housing market has been very strong since 2000 at the national, state and local levels. The weak stock market has made real estate an attractive sector for investment, and historically low interest rates have increased purchasing power. These trends, combined with population flight from cities to rural areas, have all contributed to large increases in the price of land and homes in Hampshire County and southern Franklin County. Amherst-based consultant Amy Zuckerman coined the term "Hidden Tech" to describe the growing number of well-educated professionals who run high-tech businesses from their homes in Western

Massachusetts to take advantage of the region's high quality of life. Many of these entrepreneurs have relocated from urban areas, and have used the equity from selling property in high-value urban markets to invest in real estate locally. As the price of land and homes has risen in Amherst, Northampton and other nearby towns, individuals and families with modest incomes have started to look to Montague for affordable real estate.

Table 4-3: Median Residential Sales Prices in Montague, 2001 to 2003

Type of Housing and Location	Median Sales Price			Change 2001-2003	
	2001	2002	2003	Price	Percentage
Single-Family Home					
Town-wide	\$119,000	\$120,250	\$145,000	\$26,000	21.8%
Millers Falls	\$97,400	\$131,000	\$135,800	\$38,400	39.4%
Montague City	\$127,000	\$122,450	\$150,000	\$23,000	18.1%
Montague Center	\$159,900	\$187,450	\$211,150	\$51,250	32.1%
Turners Falls	\$115,000	\$115,000	\$139,600	\$24,600	21.4%
Lake Pleasant	\$85,000	--	--	--	--
Condo					
Town-wide	\$79,000	\$87,000	\$77,700	-\$1,300	-1.6%
Duplex					
Town-wide	\$103,750	\$88,500	\$114,000	\$10,250	9.9%
Turners Falls	\$89,000	\$86,950	\$97,500	\$8,500	9.6%
Other	\$124,500	\$99,250	\$135,000	\$10,500	8.4%
Multifamily					
Town-wide	\$132,000	\$106,000	\$141,250	\$9,250	7.0%

Source: Town of Montague Assessors records, summary table provided by the Montague Planning and Conservation Department, 2004. Only arms length transactions were included in the median calculations.

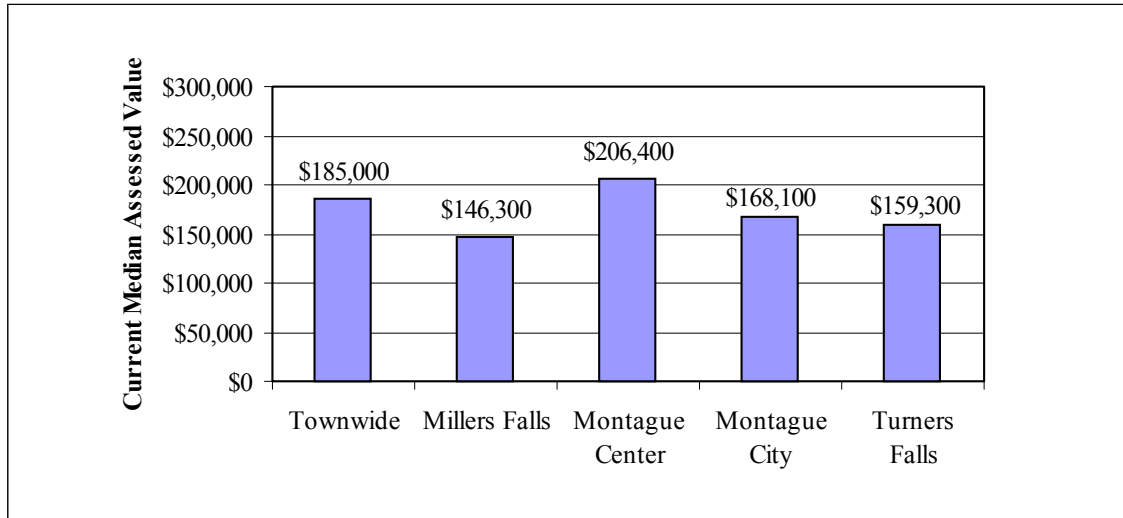
Table 4-3 summarizes the median prices for sales of residential properties in Montague for the 2001-2003 period. Based on information provided by the Montague Assessors, the table shows a trend of increased sales prices over the last few years, especially for single-family homes. Between 2001 and 2003, the median sales price for a single-family home in Montague grew from \$119,000 to \$145,000, an increase of 21.8%.

As Table 4-3 shows, residential sales prices for different areas of Montague vary considerably. Montague Center has the highest home prices. Millers Falls and Turners Falls continue to have the lowest home prices, with the exception of Lake Pleasant, which has extremely low turnover of ownership. Preliminary data on housing sales in 2004 show that residential sales prices in Montague are continuing to rise. For example, for the first ten weeks of 2004, the median sales price of single-family homes in Turners Falls is up more than 16% from 2003, and the median sales price of multi-family homes in Turners Falls is up 6% (Data provided by Montague Assessors, analysis by Montague Planning & Conservation Department).

Figure 3-1 summarizes the assessed values for homes that were built in the last six years, 1998 through 2003. Overall, 75 homes were completed during this period and issued certificates of occupancy. These 75 homes have a current (FY 2004) median assessed value

of \$185,000. More than half these homes (41 homes or 55% of the total) are located in Montague Center. The Montague Center homes have a current median assessed value of \$206,400. In comparison, the median assessed values of the 21 new homes in Turners Falls and of the 11 new homes in Millers Falls are \$159,300 and \$146,300 respectively.

Figure 4-1: Median Assessed Value of Single-Family Homes Built in Montague, 1998 to 2003



Source: Montague Assessors Records, chart prepared by the Montague Town Planner, 2004.

Increased value of real estate in Montague can be attributed in part to public investment in improvements and redevelopment projects in downtown Turners Falls. Since 2000, RDI and the Town of Montague have invested more than \$10 million in the redevelopment of three buildings in downtown Turners Falls: the Crocker and Cutlery building projects and renovation of the town-owned Colle Opera House. RDI's renovation of the Moltenbrey building, which is currently under way, is valued at \$2 million. There is good evidence that the level of public investment in Turners Falls is encouraging increasing private investment. According to records provided by the Montague Building Inspector, between 2001 and 2003, there were approximately \$480,000 in improvements to privately-owned existing buildings within three blocks of the Colle, Cutlery and Crocker buildings. More than \$312,000 (65%) of that private investment was made in 2003 alone. It is likely that this combination of public and private investment in the downtown is contributing to an increase in the value of real estate in Montague.

Housing Affordability

This section assesses Montague's housing prices and costs in terms of how affordable housing is for residents based on household incomes.

Number of Low, Moderate, and Middle-Income Households

The first step in assessing housing affordability in Montague involves estimating the number of low, moderate, and middle-income households that reside in the town. Under EO 418, low income households are considered to be those making 50% or less of the area-wide median income, moderate-income households are those making up to 80% of the area-wide median income, and middle-income households are those making up to 150% of the area-wide median income. The area-wide median income is defined as the median family income⁶ in the county where the housing units are located. For Fiscal Year (FY) 2004, the median income used for Montague's EO 418 housing certification, and that of most other Franklin County towns, is \$48,400.⁷

With this median income level, low-income households are considered to be those households earning \$24,200 or less. Moderate-income households earn between \$24,200 and \$38,700, middle-income households earn between \$38,700 and \$72,600, and upper income households earn \$72,600 or more.

Table 4-4 estimates the number of Montague households in each income category, based on the incomes reported in the 2000 U.S. Census. The Census does not break incomes out into categories that match the above groupings exactly, so approximate groupings are used. The table shows that 40% of Montague households are low income, another 19% are moderate income and 27% are middle income.

⁶ The EO 418 guidelines focus on the median income for families. There are many households that are not considered families, including people living alone and non-related individuals living together. These types of households often have lower incomes than families. This report primarily uses household income for its analysis, instead of family income, because of the more inclusive nature of the household data.

⁷ A different median income is used for housing certification for the Town of Sunderland. Sunderland is considered part of the Springfield metropolitan region, the only Franklin County town so considered. That region has a slightly higher median income (\$50,700) and therefore, slightly higher affordability thresholds for certification.

Table 4-4: Households by Income Level, in Montague and in Franklin County, 1999

	Montague Entire Town		Turners Falls		Montague Outside of Turners Falls		Franklin County	
Income Level (1999)	# Hshlds	% of Hshlds	# Hshlds	% of Hshlds	# Hshlds	% of Hshlds	# Hshlds	% of Hshlds
Low Income (\$24,999 or less)	1,451	40.1%	1,032	51.1%	419	26.2%	8,830	30.0%
Moderate Income (\$25,000 to \$39,999)	694	19.2%	324	16.1%	370	23.1%	5,633	19.1%
Middle Income (\$40,000 to \$74,999)	957	26.5%	458	22.7%	499	31.2%	9,467	32.1%
Upper Income (\$75,000 or above)	515	14.2%	204	10.1%	311	19.4%	5,562	18.9%
Total	3,617	100.0%	2,018	100.0%	1,599	100.0%	29,492	100.0%
Median Household Income (1999)	\$33,750		\$24,243		\$40,660		\$40,768	

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, *Census of Population and Housing, 2000*.

Turners Falls has more low-income households than other parts of town. Just over half (51.1%) of Turners Falls households are considered low income. In contrast, in Franklin County overall, approximately 30% of households are low income. Almost one-fifth (18.9%) of Turners Falls residents are very low-income and live below the poverty level. For the rest of Montague, the poverty rate is 6.9%. The poverty rate for Franklin County is 9.4%.

In Montague, low-income status is the most prevalent among the oldest and the youngest residents. As shown in Table 4-5, for example, 61% of households where the householder (head of household) is age 65 or over have incomes under \$25,000. A large percentage (62%) of the youngest households, headed by someone under age 25, also have low incomes. For households in the middle age groups, with householders aged 25 to 44 and aged 44 to 64, incomes are distributed more evenly.

Table 4-5: Households by Income Level, by Householder Age, in Montague, 1999

			Age of Householder							
	Total		Under Age 25		Age 25 to 44		Age 45 to 64		Age 65 or Above	
Income Level (1999)	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Low Income (\$24,999 or less)	1,451	40.1%	104	61.5%	471	37.7%	294	23.6%	582	61.1%
Moderate Income (\$25,000 to \$39,999)	694	19.2%	35	20.7%	228	18.2%	253	20.3%	178	18.7%
Middle Income (\$40,000 to \$74,999)	957	26.5%	22	13.0%	394	31.5%	410	32.9%	131	13.8%
Upper Income (\$75,000 or above)	515	14.2%	8	4.7%	157	12.6%	289	23.2%	61	6.4%
Total	3,617	100.0%	169	100.0%	1,250	100.0%	1,246	100.0%	952	100.0%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, *Census of Population and Housing, 2000*.

Affordability of Home Ownership for Low- and Moderate-Income Households

One important measure of housing affordability is the purchasing power for prospective first-time home buyers who are currently renting in the community. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, approximately 80% of renter households in Montague are of low or moderate income, and earn under \$40,000 per year (gross income of \$3,225 per month) or less.

An average moderate-income household, with annual earnings of \$30,000 (\$2,500 per month) can afford up to \$750 per month for housing costs. With the following assumptions regarding a potential home purchase, a household with an income of \$2,500 per month could afford to buy a house valued at up to \$85,000.

Assumptions:

- The home will be bought with a 30-year mortgage at 6.0% interest;
- 10% of the purchase price will be paid as a down payment;
- Annual property taxes and property insurance costs will equal 2.05% of the house value (tax rate of 1.9% (\$19/\$1,000 valuation) and property insurance rate of 0.15%);
- Mortgage insurance costs will equal 0.7% of the borrowed principal; and
- Utilities will cost approximately \$100 per month.

As shown in data from the U.S. Census, there are quite a few houses in Montague valued in this price range. However, recent sales data indicate limited availability of homes in this price range. In 2003, there were 23 sales of residential properties for \$90,000 or less in Montague, including four single family homes, nine two-family homes, one three-family home, and seven condominiums. All but four of these properties were located in Turners Falls. Additionally, the Census data does not reflect the increase in housing prices in Montague since 2000.

For low-income households earning \$20,000 per year (\$1,667 per month), homeownership is even less affordable. A household at this income level can afford to spend \$500 per month on housing costs. Using the same assumptions as above, such a household could afford to buy a home valued at \$53,000 or less. According to the 2000 Census, approximately 4% of owner-occupied single-family homes in Montague fall into this price range. However, few of these low-priced homes might be available for sale, and when they are, they may be quickly purchased. There were only four sales of residential properties in this price range in town in 2003.

The issue of housing affordability for low-income households is not unique to this area. Nationwide, home ownership is often unaffordable or unattainable for people in this income bracket. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, in the United States as a whole, 37% of households with incomes under \$20,000 own their homes. An estimated 60% of these homeowners spend over 30% of their incomes on housing costs. Together, these figures indicate that only 15% of households nationwide with incomes under \$20,000 own a home they can afford. For Massachusetts, this number is even lower; only 7% of Massachusetts households earning under \$20,000 own a home and spend less than 30% of their incomes on their housing costs.

Although there are only a limited number of homes in Montague that are affordable for low-income residents to purchase, the town has a larger supply of rental housing that may be affordable to low-income households.

Median Housing Costs

Table 4-6 reviews the median monthly housing costs for households in Montague, Franklin County, and Massachusetts overall, based on tenancy. These costs are from the last U.S. Census. According to the Census, in 2000, the median monthly housing costs for Montague households totaled \$892 for homeowners with a mortgage, \$330 for homeowners without a mortgage, and \$491 for renters. On average, these housing costs represented 21% of gross household income for owners with a mortgage, 12% of household income for owners without a mortgage, and 27% of income for renters. These percentages are all below 30 percent, the general threshold for affordability. As discussed earlier, recent data indicate that Montague's median housing costs have increased in the last few years. However, it is still believed that a majority of households in Montague have housing that is affordable based on their incomes.

Table 4-6: Median Housing Costs as a Percentage of Gross Income for Montague, 2000, Comparison to the County and State

Area	<u>For owners with mortgage</u>		<u>For owners w/out mortgage</u>		<u>For renters</u>	
	Median Monthly Costs	Median % of Income Spent on Housing	Median Monthly Costs	Median % of Income Spent on Housing	Median Monthly Costs	Median % of Income Spent on Housing
Montague	\$892	20.8%	\$330	12.0%	\$491	27.5%
Franklin County	\$978	21.7%	\$336	12.2%	\$541	26.1%
Massachusetts	\$1,353	21.9%	\$406	12.4%	\$684	25.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

A comparison of Montague's median housing costs with those for Franklin County and Massachusetts show that Montague's homeowners and renters spend about the same proportion of their incomes on housing costs as homeowners and renters in the rest of Franklin County and the State.

Housing Costs Compared to Incomes

Although housing in Montague is affordable for many residents, some low-income residents, especially renters, are cost-burdened by their housing. The 2000 U.S. Census estimated housing costs relative to income for 3,029 (84%) of the town's households (shown in Appendix Table A-9). Of those households with cost and income data, 290 homeowner households (17%) and 575 renter households (43%) spent 30% or more of their incomes on housing.

The Census data indicate that lower income households in Montague have greater rates of burdensome housing costs than higher income households, and that low-income renters and owners have trouble finding affordable housing. The Town has a large subset of very low-

income renters who subsist with incomes below the poverty line. Despite Montague's continual and ongoing efforts to assist this segment of the population and to provide additional affordable housing options for low-income renters, more assistance is needed.

For low-income owners, a key issue is the rising cost of homeownership beyond the home purchase price, including increasing property taxes and utilities. For example, between Fiscal Year (FY) 1990 and FY 2003, the average property tax bill for a single-family home in Montague more than doubled (up 110%). This is due in part to increases in assessed value, and in part to higher tax rates, as the Town struggles to maintain public services in the face of growing federal and state mandates and shrinking state contributions to local coffers. Rising costs present a challenge for low-income owners, especially seniors and others with fixed incomes.

The Census Bureau collects data on housing expenditures as a percentage of income by age group. Table 4-7 summarizes this information for Montague. The table shows that the highest rates of burdensome housing costs occur among elderly households (with a householder age 65 or older). An estimated 23% of elderly homeowners in Montague and 48% of elderly renters spend at least 30% of their incomes on their housing.

Table 4-7: Percentage of Income Spent on Housing Costs, by Householder Age, 1999

Tenancy and Householder Age	Households with Cost Data*	Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income (Number of Households)				Total Households with Unaffordable Housing (Housing Costs are 30%+ of Income)	
		Under 25%	25-29%	30-34%	35% or More	# of Hshds	% for Income Group*
Owners							
Under Age 25	11	11	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Age 25 to 44	442	269	79	48	46	94	21.3%
Age 45 to 64	718	576	61	15	66	81	11.3%
Age 65 or Over	511	339	57	26	89	115	22.5%
Total for Owners	1,682	1,195	197	89	201	290	17.2%
Renters							
Under Age 25	151	43	16	17	75	92	60.9%
Age 25 to 44	548	202	101	21	224	245	44.6%
Age 45 to 64	401	225	55	19	102	121	30.2%
Age 65 or Over	247	107	23	46	71	117	47.4%
Total for Renters	1,348	577	195	103	472	575	42.7%

**Housing costs relative to income were estimated for 77% of the town's owner-occupied housing units, and 95% of the town's rental units. Housing costs were not calculated for the 4% of Montague's rental housing units without cash rents. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000.*

In Montague, there is a small but significant number of households that expend more than 50% of their incomes in housing. These households are considered to be severely cost-burdened by their housing expenditures. The severely cost-burdened group consists of at least 398 households, including 313 renters and 85 homeowners with mortgages. Seventy percent of the severely cost-burdened households reside in Turners Falls. Households that

are severely cost-burdened by housing expenditures may find themselves with little money left over to pay for other necessities, including food, health care, transportation and home maintenance costs.

Overall, in Montague, it is estimated that at least 865 low, moderate, or middle-income households have burdensome housing costs. These households account for one-third (33%) of the households in these income groups. It is important that these households have sufficient options and opportunities to decrease their housing cost burden. One approach is to create better employment opportunities for those residents who want to work full-time, but are presently under-employed or unemployed, or who currently have low paying jobs. The other approach is to provide new affordable housing options, including through the rehabilitation of existing underutilized or abandoned housing. The Town of Montague is working to address housing and community issues on both fronts.

Affordable Housing under EO 418

To achieve housing certification under Executive Order 418 (EO 418), towns are required to demonstrate that they are working to increase the supply of housing that is affordable to residents, and to address the community's identified housing needs.

Housing certification is obtained on an annual basis. Montague received housing certification in FY 2001, FY 2002, and FY 2003. In FY 2004, housing certification was granted for Montague through a regional housing certification application submitted through the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority. To count for housing certification, new housing units must be affordable to middle income households, and can either be for renters or homeowners. Qualifying rental units for housing certification must be affordable to families earning 100% of the area-wide median income, and qualifying homeownership units must be affordable to families earning 150% of the area-wide median income.

The qualifying rental and home sales prices for housing certification are shown in Table 4-8. For FY 2004, new homes must cost \$228,927 or less to count as affordable, and new apartments must have monthly rents of no more than \$1,210. According to 2000 U.S. Census, few homes and rental units in Montague have costs above these thresholds; thus nearly all housing is affordable by the EO 418 definition. In 2000, only 2% of rental units in Montague had total monthly costs of \$1,000 or more. Similarly, only 6% of Montague's owner-occupied homes had housing values above \$200,000.

Table 4-8: Affordable Housing Rents and Purchase Prices under Executive Order 418 for Non-Metro Franklin County, FY 2004

Area Median Family Income (Non-Metro Franklin County)*	\$48,400
150% of Area Median Family Income	\$72,600
Affordable at 100% of Median Income	
Affordable Homeowner Units	
Home Price Affordable for Middle-Income Households (150% of Median Family Income)	\$228,927
Affordable Rental Units	
Monthly Rents Affordable for Middle-Income Households (100% of Median Family Income)	\$1,210

**Non-Metro Franklin County includes all Franklin County towns except Sunderland. For EO 418 housing certification, Sunderland is considered part of the Springfield metropolitan area. The area median family income for the Springfield metropolitan area is \$50,700.*

Source: Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, Instructions for Completion of FY 2004 Request for Housing Certification, 2003.

Affordable Housing under Chapter 40B

Chapter 40B of the Massachusetts General Laws, enacted in 1969, was the State's first major legislation to promote affordable housing. It encouraged towns to increase long-term affordable housing to 10% of total housing units. As was discussed earlier, the Chapter 40B definition of "affordable housing" is more restrictive than the general definition of affordability. Despite this restricted definition, as of 2001, Montague had achieved almost 10% affordable housing under Chapter 40B. Montague has a higher percentage of affordable housing than any community in Franklin County with the exception of Greenfield and Orange.

The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) estimated that Montague had 327 units of Chapter 40B affordable housing as of 2001. Montague's Chapter 40B affordable housing supply includes the 109 apartments owned and managed by the Montague Housing Authority: Hillcrest Homes (30 units), Sunrise Terrace (40 units), Keith Apartments (31 units), and Highland School Apartments (8 units). The Chapter 40B affordable housing supply also includes the Power Town Apartment and Park Villa complexes, Winslow Wentworth House managed by HRA, and previously abandoned or dilapidated units that HRA and RDI have redeveloped. Single-family homes built for low-income families by RDI can count as Chapter 40B if they have long-term deed restrictions to guarantee their affordability. Unfortunately, none of the RDI units built to date in Montague have the 30-year deed restriction on affordability required to be counted in the 40B inventory.

Table 4-9: Residential Units in Montague and Neighboring Towns that Count as Affordable under Chapter 40B, 2001

Town	Year-Round Housing Units (2000 U.S. Census)	Chapter 40B Affordable Housing Units*	Percent of Units that are Affordable, Chapter 40B Definition
Montague	3,826	327	8.6%
Deerfield	2,045	24	1.2%
Erving	625	2	0.3%
Gill	550	14	2.6%
Greenfield	8,274	1,147	13.9%
Leverett	642	0	0.0%
Sunderland	1,658	0	0.0%
Wendell	405	n/a**	n/a**

**Count as of October 1, 2001.*

***Wendell's affordable housing count may be overstated, as some of the counted units may not have guaranteed long-term affordability for low and moderate-income households. As a result, the Department of Housing and Community Development is in the process of reviewing and possibly revising Wendell's affordable housing figures.*

Source: MA Department of Housing and Community Development, 2002.

Table 4-9 lists the percentage of housing in each of the neighboring towns around Montague that is affordable according to Chapter 40B. Montague has a higher percentage of affordable housing than all its neighboring towns except for Greenfield. In Erving, Leverett, and Sunderland, less than 1% of the year-round housing stock is considered to be affordable.

The State has recently begun to expand the Chapter 40B definition of affordable housing to count additional types of units towards the 10% goal. Among the units that can now count as affordable are locally subsidized housing units, long-term housing for the mentally ill or mentally retarded, housing created through the Community Preservation Act and accessory apartments constructed after June 30, 2002. These types of housing count as affordable as long as they are serving low and moderate-income residents. Montague's affordable housing percentage under Chapter 40B may increase as a result of these changes. The town's amount of Chapter 40B affordable housing could also likely increase due to the ongoing creation of new affordable housing and housing redevelopment projects for low- and moderate-income households, including new units constructed by RDI and Habitat for Humanity, and renovations to the Moltenbrey building.

SECTION 5

POPULATION PROJECTIONS AND FUTURE HOUSING DEMAND

This section discusses population projections for Montague and the anticipated future demand for housing in town.

MISER Population Projections

The Massachusetts Institute of Social and Economic Research (MISER) develops population projections for all Massachusetts towns. MISER, located at the University of Massachusetts, serves as the U.S. Census Bureau's main data center for the Commonwealth. MISER's 2003 projections forecast population levels through 2020, and are based on 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census data and on current birth, death and migration trends. In forecasting future populations, MISER develops population projections by age and race for each town in the state. MISER creates low, middle, and high population projections, each with slightly different assumptions. MISER's projections for Montague for 2010 and 2020 and forecasted population change between 2000 and 2020 are shown in Table 5-1. MISER projects that Montague's population will grow between 2000 and 2020. The middle projection predicts that the town will increase to 8,881(5% growth) by 2020.

Table 5-1: MISER Population Projections for Montague, 2000 to 2020

		Projected Population		Population Change 2000-2020	
		2010	2020	Number	Percent
Total Population, 2000 (U.S. Census)	8,489				
Low Projection		8,444	8,489	0	0.0%
Middle Projection		8,622	8,881	392	4.6%
High Projection		8,802	9,283	794	9.4%

Source: MISER, MISER Population Projections for Massachusetts, 2000-2020, released 2003.

Table 5-2 shows MISER's middle population projections by age group. For the 2000-2020 period, the greatest population increases are expected for the 45-64 age group and for elderly, age 65 and over. The number of elderly residents in Montague is projected to increase by 391 (28.0%) by 2020. Much of the forecasted elderly population growth is driven by the aging of "baby boom" generation (born 1946 to 1964). By 2020, many baby boomers will be 65 years or age or older. One effect of an increasing elderly population could be less demand for housing for first time homebuyers and more demand for elderly housing.

Table 5-2: Projected Population Change in Montague by Age Group, 2000 to 2020

Age Group	Population		Change 2000-2020	
	2000	2020	Number	Percent
Under Age 5	506	511	+5	+1.0%
Age 5 to 19	1,642	1,456	-186	-11.3%
Age 20 to 24	459	490	+31	+6.8%
Age 25 to 44	2,484	2,278	-206	-8.3%
Age 45 to 64	1,981	2,359	+378	+19.1%
Age 65 & Over	1,397	1,788	+391	+28.0%
Total	8,468	8,882	+414	+4.9%

Source: MISER, MISER Population Projections for Massachusetts, 2000-2020, released 2003, middle-level projections.

Future Housing Demand

According to MISER's middle projections, Montague's population is forecasted to grow by an estimated 414 people between 2000 and 2020. Assuming an average household size of 2.25 people per household in 2020, the 414 additional residents will make up approximately 185 households, each of which will need housing.

Though some of the new population can probably be accommodated in existing housing, it is still likely that most of the population growth will necessitate new residential construction. In addition, the elderly, the fastest growing segment of Montague's population may have special housing needs. By 2020, MISER forecasts that the number of elderly residents in Montague will stand at almost 1,800. Assuming that 10% of these residents may be interested in traditional senior housing, there may be a demand for up to 180 new senior housing units by 2020. In the future, there is also likely to be a demand and need for other types of housing for seniors, including both subsidized and market-rate rental units, and other low-maintenance housing styles such as condominiums.

It is important to note that MISER's projections are based on demographic models and historic trends, and do not incorporate many of the factors that can influence a town's future population growth. These factors include the availability of land for new construction. The building of new housing in Montague is to a large extent controlled by the availability of land. Over the past several decades, the supply of land for development has been very limited. Most of the large parcels of developable land remaining in town are owned by a handful of families, and are currently in use for agriculture or forestry. Virtually all of these major landowners are over age 60. As these landowners age and make decisions about the disposition of their properties, it is likely that some of this land will come on the market. Land prices in Montague are currently significantly lower than in neighboring Franklin and Hampshire county communities, and there is strong demand for building lots in town. A large increase in the supply of developable land could result in population increases well beyond those predicted by MISER.

SECTION 6

SUMMARY OF MONTAGUE'S HOUSING ASSETS AND ISSUES

Based on the information that has been gathered about Montague housing, the following primary housing assets and issues have been identified.

Housing Assets

- Housing diversity. Montague's housing stock contains a range of housing types, including single-family homes, duplexes, multi-family housing and mobile homes. Approximately 55% of the town's 3,850 housing units are single-family homes, 17% (636 units) are in two-family homes, and 26% (1,005 units) are in multi-family structures with three housing units or more. Montague also has a mix of renter and homeowner housing, with renter-occupied units accounting for 39% of the town's housing stock.
- Relatively affordable housing costs. As of 2000, Montague had the fifth lowest median rent in Franklin County (of 26 towns) and housing values that are below the county average. Based on the current housing prices and costs, as documented in the 2000 Census and home sales data, homeownership in Montague is affordable for many moderate-income residents and a relatively high percentage of low-income residents.
- Large long-term affordable housing supply. Montague's level of guaranteed long-term affordable housing (8.6% of its housing stock) is larger than that of any other Franklin County community besides Greenfield (13.9%) and Orange (13.4%). Montague currently provides 15% of the Chapter 40B affordable housing units in Franklin County, and the town is working with the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), Rural Development Inc. (RDI), and other partners to promote additional appropriate affordable housing options.
- Strong commitment to housing issues by town leadership. Montague's current level of affordable housing, and the ongoing support from Town officials for the creation of additional affordable housing and the maintenance and upgrading of the town's older housing stock, demonstrate Montague's longstanding commitment to providing quality and affordable housing options for town residents.

- Planning and zoning for residential development. In the 1999 Comprehensive Plan, the Montague Planning Board designated the town's existing villages and additional areas for future residential development. Lot sizes for single-family homes are small in residential zones; there is a minimum lot size of 22,500 square feet (0.52 acres). Recent changes proposed by the Planning Board and approved by Town Meeting reduced lot sizes even further in some areas of Turners Falls, Millers Falls, and Montague City. Duplexes are allowed by right in some areas of Turners Falls and Millers Falls, and by special permit in every other zone where residential development is permitted. Frontage and lot size requirements may be reduced by special permit, with no limits specified in the Zoning Bylaws, where water and sewer are available. Multi-family homes are allowed by special permit in several areas. Development of prime farmland and large tracts of forested land is discouraged by the Comprehensive Plan, Open Space Plan and Zoning Bylaws. The Planning Board is actively working on other changes to the Zoning Bylaws to create additional options for residential development in appropriate areas.
- Noteworthy historic structures. Montague is fortunate to have a number of historic buildings and homes, many of which are located in the historic village centers. These village centers include Millers Falls, Turners Falls, Montague City, Montague Center, and Lake Pleasant. The town's historic buildings contribute significantly to the town's character and sense of place. The Town is currently conducting a survey of historic properties to call attention to their value and to help develop strategies to preserve them.
- Good management of large apartment complexes. Montague is fortunate to have good managers of many of its large residential properties. Rural Development, Inc. (Crocker, Cutlery and Moltenbrey Buildings), the Montague Housing Authority, and HallKeen Management (Power Town Apartments), maintain their properties in good condition and actively address problem tenants.

Housing Issues

- The need to continue to renovate or replace substandard housing. This issue was identified as a key housing concern in the Montague Comprehensive Plan. From 1999 through 2001, the Town of Montague used Community Development Block Grant funds for a housing and code enforcement program that focused on improving dilapidated dwellings in Turners Falls and Millers Falls. Another area in town with a number of substandard dwellings is Lake Pleasant. The Town of Montague no longer has the funds available for a housing and code enforcement program. However, it is important that these activities continue to the extent possible, and that the upgrading of substandard dwellings continues to be a priority.

- The need for additional affordable housing options for low-income residents. It is estimated that approximately half of low-income residents in Montague have unaffordable housing costs based on their household incomes. This problem is not unique to Montague. Many low-income households across Massachusetts and nationwide have difficulty finding apartments and homes they can afford. Nonetheless, it is essential that more be done to assist low-income households with burdensome housing costs.

Low-income residents in Montague could benefit from new low-cost or subsidized housing in Montague, or from better access to programs to make the current housing more affordable. Such programs include assistance for first-time home buyers and housing rehabilitation loans to help low- and moderate-income residents make home repairs and bring their houses up to code. Montague residents currently have access to both types of programs. These programs could be expanded as funding allows. It is worth noting that since one-third of elderly residents in Montague are considered to be low-income, any strategy to assist low-income residents will also help the community's seniors.

- Lack of control over the siting of new residential development. While Montague has been proactive in planning for new residential development in and adjacent to existing villages and along major roads, it remains vulnerable to proposals for development on prime farmland, and along narrow, poorly drained dirt roads in forested areas. A small number of large landowners hold most of the land within Montague that is still available for development. Much of this land is prime farmland. The Town has no control over construction of homes on "Approval Not Required" lots in these areas. Any attempt to change the zoning to make these areas harder to develop could result in landowners filing subdivision plans to establish "grandfathering" of the existing zoning. Until significant changes are made in MGL Chapter 40A, the State's zoning law, the Town runs the risk that new housing will be built in areas without appropriate water, sewer or transportation services.
- Lack of land for residential development. There is a limited amount of land still available for potential development in Montague. As mentioned above, much of this land is under the control of a few large property owners. Little land is available for individuals or small developers wishing to acquire a lot or two for residential construction. The lack of land for residential development is likely a contributing factor to the rising housing prices in town.

- The demand for residential development in Montague and the costs associated with development. The demand for new homes is increasing the pressure to develop farmland and other open space areas that the Town would like to preserve. Dozens of studies in Massachusetts, other New England states and other areas of the country have consistently shown that increased development in rural areas creates increased demand for municipal services, thus further increasing the tax rate and making housing less affordable. The studies have also demonstrated that the protection of farmland and open space is an effective strategy for promoting a stable tax base. Farmland and open space typically costs less in municipal services than they generate in property taxes, and residential development typically cost more. For example, in 1992, the American Farmland Trust (AFT) conducted a Cost of Community Services (COCS) analysis for several towns in this region. The AFT study found that in Deerfield, for every dollar generated in tax revenues by residential development, the municipal services required by that development cost the town one dollar and sixteen cents (\$1.16). The study also found that for every dollar generated in taxes by farmland and open space, the municipal services required by that land cost approximately twenty-nine cents (\$0.29), resulting in a positive fiscal impact to the town.
- Rising property taxes. Recent property tax increases may be unaffordable to residents on fixed or limited incomes. Between 1990 and 2003, Montague's average single-family tax bill grew from \$1,033 to \$2,162, an increase of 109%. Large tax increases can place a great burden on residents with limited and fixed incomes, and can leave them with little money for necessary home repairs and maintenance. Low-income, elderly and disabled residents may also be more dependent than other residents on public services, including libraries and other cultural services, recreational programs, health care and special education, all of which are expensive to provide. As the State continues to cut its budget for such services, Town officials are keenly aware of being in a dilemma with respect to the welfare of its low-income residents, forced to choose between raising taxes to pay for programs such as the Senior Center and part-time Town Nurse, which benefit low-income, elderly and disabled residents, or cutting these services in an effort to maintain housing affordability.
- Outdated and cumbersome Subdivision Regulations. The town's subdivision regulations, last amended in 1989, are in need of major revisions to make them easier to use and more amenable to construction of affordable housing.

- The need for better employment opportunities for Montague's very low-income residents. More than one in eight residents (13.1%) in Montague lives in poverty. In Turners Falls, the poverty rate is even higher: 18.9%. Montague's housing is relatively affordable compared to neighboring communities. However, at very low-income levels, it is still very difficult for people to find housing they can afford. Many of the households living in poverty are non-elderly. For these households, housing costs are burdensome not because of housing costs are unreasonably high, but because their income levels are so low. It is important that these residents have access to employment opportunities that can help raise their income levels, and help make their housing more affordable. The Town is currently updating its Economic Development Plan. It is likely that federal and state assistance will be required to facilitate implementation of its recommendations.

Quantifying Montague's Housing Needs

Earlier in this chapter, there was an examination of the percentage of income spent on housing costs, for different income groups and age groups. Table 6-1 summarizes the findings of this analysis.

Montague has a total of 2,618 low, moderate, and middle-income households with housing cost data. (According to the 2000 Census, there are 3,102 total households in these income categories, combined. The collected data represents 84% of them). An estimated 865 of these households (33%) have burdensome housing costs. These burdened households include 752 low-income households, 98 moderate-income households, and 15 middle-income households. Overall, it is estimated that 290 homeowners and 575 renters in Montague have unaffordable housing.

Table 6-1: Current Estimates of Low-, Moderate-, and Middle-Income Households with Affordability Needs in Montague, by Age and Tenancy, 1999

Household Types	Low Income	Moderate Income	Middle Income	All Income Eligible Households EO 418
<u>Households with Housing Cost Data</u>				
Homeowners	384	306	634	1,324
Renters	820	290	184	1,294
Total	1,204	596	818	2,618
<u>Elderly Households with Affordability Needs</u>				
Homeowners	81	28	6	115
Renters	111	6	0	117
Total Elderly	192	34	6	232
<u>Non-Elderly Households with Affordability Needs</u>				
Homeowners	123	43	9	175
Renters	437	21	0	458
Total Non-Elderly	560	64	9	633
Total Homeowners with Affordability Needs	204	71	15	290
Total Renters with Affordability Needs	548	27	0	575
Total Households with Affordability Needs	752	98	15	865

Estimates prepared by FRCOG. The estimates are based on data from the 2000 U.S. Census, Summary File 3.

SECTION 7

POTENTIALLY SUITABLE LOCATIONS FOR FUTURE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Montague Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the Town in 1999, included a Future Land Use Map which showed preferred locations for residential, commercial and industrial development, as well as areas planned for future agricultural use and conservation. The Future Land Use Map was developed by the Planning Board with input from residents during the comprehensive planning process. Shown in this Housing Plan at the end of this section, the map is a useful guide for developers and town officials planning for future residential growth.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends that residential growth be concentrated in and adjacent to existing village centers. In addition, the Future Land Use Map provides for residential growth areas along Hillside Road and Turners Falls Road, and along the east side of Greenfield Road north of Hatchery Road (shown on the map mainly as Residential (R)).

Areas for low-density rural residential development (RR) include:

- East of the village of Millers Falls along Wendell Road and the north side of Mormon Hollow Road;
- Along Dry Hill Road;
- Along Ripley Road, West Chestnut Hill Road, the southern section of East Chestnut Hill Road and Chestnut Hill Loop; and
- In the Taylor Hill area of Montague Center

The Principles and Guidelines for Affordable Housing, developed by the Montague Housing Partnership in 1992, include specific location-based guidelines for different types of housing. The plan designated four separate regions of town:

- Downtown Turners Falls;
- Other villages, including the “hill” section of Turners Falls outside the downtown;
- Suburban areas, including Turners Falls Road, Hillside Road, Randall Road; Greenfield Road north of Randall Road, Federal Street north of Ripley Road; Millers Falls Road east of East Mineral Road and Wendell Road west of Mormon Hollow Road; and
- Rural areas.

The guidelines for development in each area are summarized in Table 7-1.

Table 7-1: Guidelines for Future Housing Development Established by the Montague Housing Partnership

	Conversion of Rental Units to Owner-Occupied Units	Rehabilitation of Existing Homes	Creation of New Owner-Occupied Units	Creation of New Renter-Occupied Units	Creation of Single-Room Occupancy Units
Downtown Turners Falls	Encourage	Encourage; Housing for mixed income levels desirable	Desirable	Discourage new subsidized units due to the large number of subsidized units already; Allow new non-assisted units	Possibly desirable
Other Villages and Turners Falls outside of the Downtown	Allow	Encourage	Allow; Affordable units for low- and moderate-incomes households desirable	Encourage proposals with up to 20% affordable units for low- and moderate-income households; Discourage proposals with over 50% subsidized units; Elderly housing desirable	Possibly desirable
Suburban Areas	Allow	Encourage	Allow; Encourage units to be consistent with traditional growth patterns and suburban character; Affordable units desirable	Multi-family housing with under 6 units desirable; Discourage multi-family development with over 5 units or clusters of multi-family units; Mix of renter- and owner-occupied units in same development desirable	Not addressed
Rural Areas	Allow	Encourage	Allow; Encourage housing to be consistent with traditional growth patterns and rural character; Affordable units desirable	Scattered duplexes desirable; Discourage clusters of duplexes; Mix of renter- and owner-occupied units in same development desirable	Not addressed

Encourage: The Town should actively encourage this type of housing.

Desirable: The type of housing is good for the Town but not a priority for active assistance.

Allow: The Town should be neutral towards this type of housing.

Discourage: The Town should actively discourage this type of housing.

Source: Montague Housing Partnership, Principles and Guidelines for Affordable Housing Developments, 1992.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

(to be inserted here)

SECTION

8

RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES

The following strategies are recommended to maintain, increase and diversify Montague's housing stock and ensure continued affordability to residents with low incomes and special needs.

General Strategies

- Revive the Montague Housing Partnership. The Montague Housing Partnership should be reconstituted as an active entity to advocate for the retention, improvement and creation of affordable housing opportunities in Montague. Its membership should include Town staff (Building Inspector, Health Director, Town Planner), representatives of HRA, RDI and the Montague Housing Authority, a banker, a landlord, and residents who can represent the special housing needs of low-income, elderly, young and disabled populations.
- Develop a Housing Production Plan. In accordance with regulations promulgated by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), cities and towns that develop and adopt an affordable housing plan for approval by DHCD may request certification of compliance with the plan. Certification can be achieved by demonstrating production of an increase of at least 3/4 of one percent (0.75%) of total year-round housing units in low and moderate-income housing units that are eligible for inclusion on the Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory. Communities certified to be in compliance with an affordable housing plan may deny comprehensive permit applications for a one-year period following certification that it has produced 3/4 of one percent (0.75%) of the total year-round housing units, or for two years if they have produced one and 1/2 percent (1.50%) of the total year-round housing units. For Montague, 0.75% of the year-round housing stock would equal approximately 30 new housing units.

While the DHCD targets for housing production under this program are very high, there are no penalties if the production goals are not reached. This Housing Plan could be easily amended to meet DHCD requirements for a Housing Production Plan; doing so could help the Town strengthen its strategies to encourage new housing creation. If the Town did experience an increase in development, having a Housing Production Plan would give it more control over 40B proposals.

- Continue partnership with HRA on CDBG funding. The Town should continue its partnership with the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority in applying for Community Development Block Grant funds to support affordable housing programs in Montague. The Town should take a more proactive role in working with HRA to determine the most effective use of CDBG funds for this purpose.
- Work with HRA and RDI to ensure consistency of new development. The Town should work closely with the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority and Rural Development, Inc., to ensure that new housing developed by the agencies is consistent with this plan, the Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map, and Open Space and Recreation Plan.
- Work with housing developers to ensure long-term affordability. The Town should work closely with the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Rural Development, Inc. and other builders of affordable housing to ensure that new housing developed by these agencies remains affordable to low- and moderate-income households, preferably in perpetuity, but certainly for a minimum of thirty (30) years. Housing that remains affordable for low- or moderate-income households for at least 30 years will count towards the town's total affordable housing stock under Chapter 40B.
- Monitor sales of affordable units. The Town should work with HRA and the Montague Housing Partnership to monitor sales of dedicated affordable homeownership units to ensure that they remain affordable.

The Town should also work with HRA and the Montague Housing Partnership to monitor sales of expiring affordable rental units to preserve residential affordability as a major component of any redevelopment or change in use or ownership.

- Preserve affordability of CDC housing. The Town should work with the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority and the Franklin County Community Development Corporation (CDC) to develop a plan to preserve affordability of the CDC's affordable rental units as a major component of any redevelopment or change in use or ownership, respecting the use of this property for youth transitional housing overseen by Dial/Self. The plan might involve a transition to limited equity homeownership for these properties.
- Preserve affordable housing in the Power Town Apartment complex. The Town should work with the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority and Power Town Apartments HallKeen Management to ensure that Power Town Apartments will continue to have affordable apartments for the long term. The affordability restrictions for the Power Town complex are scheduled to expire in eight years.
- Encourage artist housing. The Town should work with the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, private developers and the local arts community to encourage development of affordable live-work space for artists in Montague.

- Encourage senior housing. The Town should work with the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Rural Development Inc., and other non-profit and for-profit housing developers to encourage the development of diverse types of housing specifically designed for older residents. Projects that include both market-rate and affordable units are preferable.
- Renew Housing Code Inspection program. The Town should seek funding to renew the Housing Code Inspection Program to improve the quality of rental housing in Montague. The Inspection Program could include inspections of rental property prior to new tenants moving in; this could help protect tenants from substandard rental housing, and also protect landlords from tenants who cause property damage. The City of North Adams has a pre-rental inspection program that Montague could look to as a possible model.
- Continue to promote the rehabilitation of substandard housing. Upgrading of substandard dwellings is a priority for the Town. It is especially important to upgrade or replace the two-family and multi-family structures which are currently in extreme despair and which contribute disproportionately to Montague's housing problems.
- Make Town-owned land available for affordable housing creation. The Town should consider making tax title properties available for the development of affordable housing, with a preference for home ownership, where such use is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map, Open Space Plan and the Montague Zoning Bylaws.
- Consider adoption of the Community Preservation Act. The Town should consider adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) to generate a new source of funding for the development of affordable housing and protection of open space. Communities that adopt the CPA can impose a property tax surcharge which sets aside funds to address local needs related to open space protection, affordable housing, and historic preservation. Local CPA funds are matched by the Commonwealth through the Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund. Given the fact that increasing property taxes has a negative impact on housing affordability, the Town should actively advocate for changes in the CPA to allow alternative funding sources.
- Seek new ideas to make home ownership more affordable. Work with entities such as Housing For Humanity, nearby housing coops, nearby community land trusts, and others as possible models for additional affordable home ownership.

- Encourage greater levels of homeownership in Turners Falls. Currently less than half (47%) of housing units in Turners Falls are owner occupied. In Montague outside of Turners Falls, the homeowner rate is 69%. A higher level of homeownership in Turners Falls would contribute to the area's revitalization and would help make the village a more attractive place to live. To encourage homeownership in Turners Falls, some homeownership assistance programs, such as first-time homebuyers programs, could be targeted to residents considering purchasing homes in Turners Falls. In addition, the Town could further publicize the village's recent and ongoing reinvestment, redevelopment, and streetscape improvements to promote Turners Falls as an attractive place in which to buy a home.
- Encourage further reforms to Chapter 40B. Work with legislators to encourage the State to continue revising Chapter 40B to provide additional flexibility and local control in the creation of affordable housing, and to further expand the definition of "affordable housing."

Zoning Strategies

- Allow a greater variety of housing types, including townhouses, condos, and garden apartments, and develop additional standards and guidelines for housing development.
- Amend the Zoning Bylaws to refer specifically to assisted living facilities and to allow assisted living facilities by special permit in appropriate areas. Presently, Montague's zoning regulates assisted living facilities as "lodging houses."
- Consider revising the Zoning Bylaws to expand the number of residential districts and allow duplexes by right and multi-family dwellings by special permit in additional areas. Require new multi-family construction to meet design standards and limits on the number of units to ensure compatibility with existing neighborhoods.
- Create flexible development options to allow clustering of homes on smaller lots.
- Create a special permit option allowing a density bonus for the creation of affordable housing and assisted living in selected zoning districts, such as areas zoned as AF-2 and AF-4. Resource protection districts, including the Agricultural Business Overlay District and the Water Supply Protection District, should be excluded from this option.
- Investigate whether the Town should establish an inclusionary zoning bylaw mandating creation of affordable units in new developments, or contribution to an affordable housing fund in lieu of housing creation.
- Amend the Accessory Apartment Bylaw to allow creation of accessory apartments in garages, barns and other secondary structures.

- Consider innovative strategies, such as transfer of development rights, that could promote housing development in areas identifies for residential growth in the Comprehensive Plan, while creating disincentives for development of prime farmland and isolated rural areas.

Comprehensive Permits

The Town should work proactively with developers to support comprehensive permit projects that are consistent with this plan, the Montague Comprehensive Plan and Open Space and Recreation Plan. This might include identifying specific parcels of land which have been planned and zoned for future residential growth, where comprehensive permit applications should be encouraged.

The Zoning Board of Appeals should develop Comprehensive Permit policies, guidelines and regulations that:

- Reflect the recommendations of the Montague Comprehensive Plan and this Housing Plan with respect to preferred locations for future residential development and preferred types of housing;
- Ensure that housing developed under Comprehensive Permits contributes to Montague's stock of long-term affordable housing while respecting whenever possible the scale and context of the neighborhoods in which they will be built. Development subject to Comprehensive Permits should be designed as mixed market rate/affordable developments;
- Establish criteria and conditions for approval of Comprehensive Permits when and if the threshold of 10% of Montague's year-round housing stock having guaranteed long-term affordability has been reached; and
- Establish a monitoring process to ensure that affordable units developed under a Comprehensive Permit remain affordable when properties change hands.

Projected Impacts of these Strategies and Recommendations on Montague's Affordable Housing Supply

This section summarizes the projected impacts of the strategies and recommendations proposed to increase housing affordability in Montague. A number of these strategies do not involve the construction of new housing. Rather, they look at options for increasing the affordability of the town's existing housing stock. These options include rehabilitating existing housing, creating new new accessory apartments and additional units in existing single-family homes and duplexes, and ensuring that affordable rental housing managed by the Franklin County Community Development Corporation and HallKeen Management (Power Town Apartments) continues to remain affordable for low- and moderate-income households.

The proposed specific strategies to promote housing affordability for renters are presented in Table 8-1 and strategies for homeowners are presented in Table 8-2. These strategies will help increase housing affordability in Montague for low-, moderate- and middle-income households who currently face burdensome housing expenditures (few middle-income households in Montague currently have burdensome housing costs). These strategies will also help address other concerns of the community regarding recent development trends and the need to preserve the town's open space and prime farmland.

The potential impacts of these strategies in addressing affordable housing issues are summarized in the tables below. The targets shown are for homeowners and renters over a ten-year time period. This time horizon is used to recognize that some years may have less affordable housing creation than other years, and to give the community some flexibility in improving housing affordability.

Implementation of the strategies proposed to create housing depend on the availability of public funding through HRA, RDI or other sources to support them. If public funds are not available, Montague's ability to address community housing issues will be severely limited.

It is also important to note that the Town of Montague does not have the capacity to develop housing. It relies on non-profit organizations, such as Rural Development Inc., and on private developers for creation of both subsidized and market-rate housing. Therefore, the Town's ability to meet housing creation targets depends on the interest and capacity of private developers to implement projects in Montague, and on the availability of sites appropriate for creation of housing.

Table 8-1: Proposed Strategies to Promote Housing Affordability for Renters, and their Potential Impacts over a Ten-Year Period

Strategies for Renters [†]	Low-Income Households	Moderate-Income Households	Middle-Income Households	Total EO 418 Target Households
Rental Units Created through Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Projects	5-10	5-10	10	20-30
New Rental Housing for Seniors , designed for a mix of incomes	5-10	5-10	5-10	15-30
New Accessory Apartments and Addition of New Units to Existing Single-Family Homes and Duplexes , constructed in appropriate areas	5-10	5-10	0	10-20
Preservation of Affordable Housing Component in buildings owned by Franklin County's Community Development Corporation	5	5	0	10
Preservation of affordable housing component in Power Town Apartments*	20	20	35	75
First-Time Homebuyer Assistance Programs to Help Low- and Moderate-Income Rental Households Purchase Homes ; program particularly to promote homeownership in downtown Turners Falls	5-10	5-10	0	10-20
TOTAL IMPACT OF STRATEGIES FOR RENTERS	45-65	45-65	50-55	140-185

Table 8-2: Proposed Strategies to Promote Housing Affordability for Homeowners, and their Potential Impacts over a Ten-Year Period

Strategies for Homeowners [†]	Low-Income Households	Moderate-Income Households	Middle-Income Households	Total EO 418 Target Households
Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program , for low- and moderate-income households	5-10	10-15	0	15-25
New Accessory Apartments and Additional Units in Existing Single-Family Homes and Duplexes , constructed in appropriate areas	5	5-10	5	15-20
New Subsidized Low- and Moderate-Income Single Family Homes and Duplexes	10	10-20		15-25
New Privately-developed Market Rate Single Family Homes and Duplexes[‡]		50	70	120
TOTAL IMPACT OF STRATEGIES FOR HOMEOWNERS	20-25	75-95	75	170-195

[†] The Town's ability to increase affordable housing and implement redevelopment and rehabilitation projects over the ten-year period will depend largely on the availability of land, public and private developers and their ability to secure public funding for these projects.

* For planning purposes, it is assumed that approximately half of the 82 affordable units at Power Town Apartments will be maintained as affordable, with the rest allowed to return to either market rate (projected to be affordable to middle-income households) or commercial use (first floor), thus addressing the Town's desire for mixed-income projects and mixed-use buildings in Turners Falls.

[‡] A development rate of 15 units per year is assumed; with 80% of these units projected to be affordable to moderate and middle-income households.

A number of the proposed strategies could help increase Montague's percentage of affordable housing under Chapter 40B. Low-income senior housing and affordable single-family homes are two types of housing that can count towards the Chapter 40B affordable housing count. To count as affordable housing for Chapter 40B, the units must be for low- or moderate-income households and must be guaranteed affordable to these households for at least 30 years.

The strategies outlined in the tables above are ambitious, and have the potential to reduce significantly the number of Montague residents with unaffordable housing. These strategies demonstrate the Town of Montague's continuing commitment to addressing housing issues, to offering a variety of housing options, and to providing residents with housing that is affordable based on their incomes. The strategies presented above are projected to create at least 140 affordable rental housing units and 170 affordable homeownership units within ten years.

APPENDIX

Housing Section of the Montague Comprehensive Plan, 1999

Additional Housing and Demographic Data for Montague from the U.S. Census

Table A-1: Age of Montague Housing, by Tenure and Occupancy, 2000

Table A-2: Number of Rooms in Montague Housing, by Tenancy and Occupancy, 2000

Table A-3: Number of Bedrooms in Montague Housing, by Tenancy and Occupancy, 2000

Table A-4: Tenancy by Age of Householder in Montague, 2000

Table A-5: Tenancy by Age of Householder by Location in Montague, 2000

Table A-6: Monthly Costs in Montague for Homeowners with Mortgages, 2000

Table A-7: Monthly Costs in Montague for Homeowners without Mortgages, 2000

Table A-8: Monthly Costs in Montague for Renters, 2000

Table A-9: Household Income Distribution in Montague, 1999

Table A-10: Percentage of Household Income Spent on Housing Costs by Income Level and Tenancy, in Montague, 1999

Comparative Housing Statistics for Montague and Nearby Towns from the U.S. Census

Table A-11: Number of Housing Units, 1990 and 2000

Table A-12: Types of Housing Structures, 2000

Table A-13: Housing Tenancy and Vacancy Rates, 2000

Table A-14: Owner-Occupied Housing Costs, 2000

Table A-15: Rental Housing Costs, 2000

Income Eligibility Guidelines for Programs Administered by the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) and for Montague Housing Authority (MHA) Apartments (Table A-16)

Housing Section of the Montague Comprehensive Plan, 1999

The quality of housing in Montague has an obvious and direct impact on every household in the town. This is true of both the current housing and future housing options. In particular a fundamental challenge to the well being of the town and many of its residents is the quality of the housing experience and housing stock in downtown Turners Falls and, to a lesser extent, Millers Falls. Beyond these two villages, however, there are housing concerns which impact all areas of town and all portions of the population.

Improving the livability of neighborhoods by reducing crime, improving the availability of goods and services, resolving traffic problems and maintaining parks and open spaces is as important as the physical condition of the housing stock. The future construction of new or redeveloped housing in the community will occur only if individuals and families choose to make Montague their home.

Action Steps:

The need to take action on housing issues is addressed most especially by one of the eight comprehensive goals, **Ensure the quality of our residential neighborhoods and our residential growth**. In order to do so the following steps should be taken.

Substandard housing in the downtown areas.

The town needs to address the substandard housing situation in downtown Turners Falls and, to a lesser extent, in downtown Millers Falls, with a coordinated approach.

Inventory the housing stock in downtown areas.

(Lead: Community Development Planner; alternate lead: Building Inspector)

(Others: potential help from community members and/or student interns)

Create a team to improve the housing.

The town must bring together a team of town staff and community members to identify areas needing improvement and determine strategies for bringing about that improvement. While doing this, this team must keep in mind the primary goal of livability of the neighborhoods, seeking input from the community so that the effect of decisions on households is thought through carefully.

(Lead: Board of Selectmen; alternate lead: Town Administrator)

(Others: Community Development Planner, Health Agent, Police Chief, Building Inspector, local landlords, the Community Partnership for a safe Montague, and other community members)

The team needs to consider improvements to the livability through possible addition of park space, community gardens, and public meeting spaces.

Housing Section of the Montague Comprehensive Plan, 1999

Develop strategies to deal with severely negligent landlords.

Strategies should revolve particularly around the powers of the Health Board and should use the Attorney General's receivership program, especially when a building can be rehabilitated. It should also consider the use of condemnation proceedings, but only when the housing in question is too far gone to be saved. This latter approach, combined with possible state demolition funds, is particularly appropriate if there are clusters of vacant, neglected housing. All these tactics will work towards improving the livability of the neighborhoods in Turners Falls and Millers Falls.

(Lead: Housing Team; alternate lead: Town Administrator)

(Others: Community Development Planner, Health Agent, Police Chief, Building Inspector, local landlords, Community Partnership for a Safe Montague, and other community members)

Develop strategies for upgrading/replacing housing stock.

When determining strategies for upgrade or replacement of housing stock, this team should give priority to a mixture of affordable and mixed income home ownership. Also viable would be a combination of home ownership and rental units. Banks are supportive of owner-occupied duplexes.

(Lead: Housing Team; alternate lead: Community Development Planner)

(Others: Town Administrator, Health Agent, Police Chief, Building Inspector, local landlords, Community Partnership for a Safe Montague, and other community members)

Allow mixed commercial/residential uses.

The Planning Board needs to modify existing zoning bylaws both to support the traditional patterns in these areas and to encourage a healthy mix of commerce and residences.

(Lead: Planning Board; alternate lead: Community Development Planner)

New housing and prime agricultural lands.

The town needs to develop housing options that help keep residential development off prime agricultural lands while protecting the viability of those farm businesses.

Implement flexible open space development options.

One or more of the following bylaw changes should be implemented: open space subdivision, farmland back lot development, transfer of development rights.

(Lead: Planning Board; alternate lead: Community Development Planner)

Housing Section of the Montague Comprehensive Plan, 1999

Future housing needs.

Inventory the housing stock throughout the remainder of the town.

Inventorying of the housing stock in downtown Turners Falls and Millers Falls has been addressed in an earlier action step. The housing stock throughout the other parts of town should be systematically inventoried, including both village and rural areas.

(Lead: Community Development Planner; alternate lead: Building Inspector)

(Others: potential help from community members and/or student interns)

Closely assess demographic trends.

Demographic trends and their possible future impacts on the housing in Montague should be closely analyzed.

(Lead: Community Development Planner; alternate lead: Planning Board)

Encourage private market answers to future needs by modifying bylaws.

Subdivision and zoning changes that encourage private market answers should be developed, depending on the identified need for future housing for family, elderly, and non-family households. Among suggested changes are the addition of greater flexibility in subdivision bylaws; changes to the types of housing allowed by right versus by special permit; and/or additional flexibility in zoning bylaws to allow more infill development, such as smaller lot sizes.

(Lead: Planning Board; alternate lead: Community Development Planner)

Pursue public housing strategies when appropriate.

Public housing strategies should be pursued where projections indicate an increased demand for housing for special needs populations, the homeless, and lower income elderly and family households. A point person should be selected to facilitate this initiative.

(Lead: Housing Team; alternate lead: Town Administrator)

(Others: Board of Selectmen, Montague Housing Authority, partnership with Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority)

Encourage an assisted living retirement facility.

An affordable facility which would allow residents to remain in town could be considered either as a private development or a public venture.

(Lead: Housing Team; alternate lead: Community Development Planner)

(Others: Town Administrator)

Housing Section of the Montague Comprehensive Plan, 1999

Extend infrastructure to designated residential growth areas.

Potential growth areas are identified on this plan's "Conceptual Future Land Use Map." Infrastructure would include water and sewer as well as gas and cable. This should be incorporated into the town's overall capital improvements planning effort.

(Lead: Board of Selectmen; alternate lead: Highway Department)

(Others: Town Administrator, Community Development Planner, Waste Water Treatment Facility, Turners Falls Water Department, Cable Commission)

Develop phased growth bylaw.

The impact of phased growth bylaws on other towns should be studied. Such a bylaw would prepare the town for sudden heavy residential growth were it to develop, and ease the growth strains on schools and infrastructure.

(Lead: Planning Board; alternate lead: Community Development Planner)

New septic disposal regulations and technology.

The impact of these on current land use should be evaluated.

Study the updated Title V regulations.

In particular, the updated Title V regulations need to be closely studied and, if needed, subsequent actions determined. The updated state Title V regulations allow more flexibility for newer septic disposal technological solutions. This could lower the lot size required in areas where soil constraints have traditionally mandated large lots. If so, the town should balance this against the desire for areas that support wildlife and other ecological needs.

(Lead: Community Development Planner; alternate lead: Planning Board)

(Others: Health Agent, Health Board, Conservation Commission)

Additional Housing and Demographic Data for Montague from the U.S. Census

Table A-1: Age of Montague Housing, by Tenure and Occupancy, 2000

Year Constructed	Owner-Occupied		Renter-Occupied		Vacant*	
	Housing Units	Percent of Total	Housing Units	Percent of Total	Housing Units	Percent of Total
1999 to March 2000	23	1.0%	13	0.9%	0	0.0%
1990 to 1998	220	10.0%	15	1.1%	0	0.0%
1980 to 1989	198	9.0%	118	8.3%	1	0.4%
1960 to 1979	479	21.8%	268	18.9%	66	28.9%
1940 to 1959	475	21.6%	328	23.1%	16	7.0%
1939 or earlier	799	36.4%	680	47.8%	145	63.6%
Total Units	2,194	100.0%	1,422	100.0%	228	100.0%
Median Year Constructed	1954		1942		Pre-1940	

*The Census Bureau considers housing units that have seasonal or occasional residents to be vacant.

Note: the numbers presented here may vary from those in Table 2-1 because Table 2-1 uses Census data collected from 100% of respondents, and this table uses information collected from only a sample of respondents. The housing age data shown here are based on information provided directly by respondents regarding the age of their homes. These data show similar construction trends to those indicated by the records of the Montague Building Inspector (and provided in Table 2-7). According to the Building Inspector, building permits for 203 new housing units were issued between 1990 and 2000.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

Table A-2: Number of Rooms in Montague Housing, by Tenancy and Occupancy, 2000

Number of Rooms	Owner-Occupied		Renter-Occupied		Vacant/Seasonal*	
	Housing Units	Percent of Total	Housing Units	Percent of Total	Housing Units	Percent of Total
1 room	0	0.0%	30	2.1%	32	14.0%
2 room	8	0.4%	86	6.0%	7	3.1%
3 room	13	0.6%	262	18.4%	28	12.3%
4 room	248	11.3%	519	36.5%	73	32.0%
5 room	514	23.4%	315	22.2%	42	18.4%
6 room	639	29.1%	130	9.1%	22	9.6%
7 room	368	16.8%	52	3.7%	6	2.6%
8 room	204	9.3%	13	0.9%	7	3.1%
9 or more rooms	200	9.1%	15	1.1%	11	4.8%
Total Housing Units	2,194	100.0%	1,422	100.0%	228	100.0%
Average Number of Rooms	6.2		4.2		4.3	

*The Census Bureau considers housing that is used only seasonally or occasionally to be vacant.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population & Housing, 2000.

Additional Housing and Demographic Data for Montague from the U.S. Census

Table A-3: Number of Bedrooms in Montague Housing, by Tenancy and Occupancy, 2000

Number of Bedrooms	Owner-Occupied		Renter-Occupied		Vacant/Seasonal*	
	Housing Units	Percent of Total	Housing Units	Percent of Total	Housing Units	Percent of Total
No bedroom	0	0.0%	30	2.1%	32	14.0%
1 bedroom	51	2.3%	421	29.6%	44	19.3%
2 bedrooms	585	26.7%	608	42.8%	84	36.8%
3 bedrooms	969	44.2%	311	21.9%	54	23.7%
4 bedrooms	472	21.5%	49	3.4%	10	43.9%
5 or more bedrooms	117	5.3%	3	0.2%	4	1.8%
Total Housing Units	2,194	100.0%	1,422	100.0%	228	100.0%
Average Number of Bedrooms	3.1		2.0		1.9	

*The Census Bureau considers housing that is used only seasonally or occasionally to be vacant.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population & Housing, 2000.

Table A-4: Tenancy by Age of Householder in Montague, 2000

Age of Householder (Head of Household)	Number Of Households	Owner Household		Renter Household	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under Age 25	162	11	0.5%	151	10.6%
Age 25 to 34	468	213	9.7%	255	17.9%
Age 35 to 44	526	410	18.7%	316	22.2%
Age 45 to 54	900	619	28.2%	281	19.8%
Age 55 to 64	397	261	11.9%	136	9.6%
Age 65 to 74	422	308	14.0%	114	8.0%
Age 75 or over	541	372	17.0%	169	11.9%
Total	3,416	2,194	100.0%	1,422	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population & Housing, 2000.

Table A-5: Tenancy by Age of Householder by Location in Montague, 2000

Age of Householder (Head of Household)	Number Of Households	Montague Entire Town		Turners Falls		Montague Outside of Turners Falls	
		Owners	Renters	Owners	Renters	Owners	Renters
Under Age 25	162	11	151	0	110	11	41
Age 25 to 34	468	213	255	95	157	118	98
Age 35 to 44	526	410	316	160	177	250	139
Age 45 to 54	900	619	281	267	207	352	74
Age 55 to 64	397	261	136	116	83	145	53
Age 65 to 74	422	308	114	195	99	113	15
Age 75 or over	541	372	169	174	140	198	29
Total	3,416	2,194	1,422	1,007	973	1,187	449

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

Additional Housing and Demographic Data for Montague from the U.S. Census

Table A-6: Monthly Costs in Montague for Homeowners with Mortgages, 2000

Monthly Costs for Homeowners with Mortgages (2000)	Montague Entire Town		Turners Falls		Montague Outside of Turners Falls	
	Number of Homes	Percent of Total*	Number of Homes	Percent of Total*	Number of Homes	Percent of Total*
Under \$300	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
\$300 to \$499	97	8.7%	53	10.9%	44	7.0%
\$500 to \$599	74	6.6%	47	9.6%	27	4.3%
\$600 to \$699	122	10.9%	53	10.9%	69	11.0%
\$700 to \$799	122	10.9%	61	12.5%	61	9.7%
\$800 to \$899	157	14.0%	96	19.7%	61	9.7%
\$900 to \$999	134	12.0%	40	8.2%	94	14.9%
\$1,000 to \$1,249	283	25.3%	106	21.7%	177	28.1%
\$1,250 to \$1,499	96	8.6%	20	4.1%	76	12.1%
\$1,500 or more	33	3.0%	12	2.5%	21	3.3%
Total	1,118	100.0%	488	100.0%	630	100.0%
Median Costs	\$892		\$831		\$958	

*Percentages are based on owner-occupied units with estimated housing costs. The Census Bureau calculated monthly housing costs for 77% of the town's owner-occupied housing units.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population & Housing, 2000.

Table A-7: Monthly Costs in Montague for Homeowners without Mortgages, 2000

Monthly Costs for Homeowners without Mortgages (2000)	Montague Entire Town		Turners Falls		Montague Outside of Turners Falls	
	Number of Homes	Percent of Total*	Number of Homes	Percent of Total*	Number of Homes	Percent of Total*
Under \$300	212	37.1%	98	32.2%	114	42.7%
\$300 to \$399	275	48.2%	148	48.7%	127	47.6%
\$400 to \$499	84	14.7%	58	19.1%	26	9.7%
\$500 to \$599	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	571	100.0%	304	100.0%	267	100.0%
Median Costs	\$330		\$346		\$316	

*Percentages are based on owner-occupied units with estimated housing costs. The Census Bureau calculated monthly housing costs for 77% of the town's owner-occupied housing units.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population & Housing, 2000.

Additional Housing and Demographic Data for Montague from the U.S. Census

Table A-8: Monthly Costs in Montague for Renters, 2000

Monthly Costs for Renters (2000)	Montague Entire Town		Turners Falls		Montague Outside of Turners Falls	
	Number of Units	Percent of Total*	Number of Units	Percent of Total*	Number of Units	Percent of Total*
Under \$200	157	11.6%	150	16.1%	7	1.7%
\$200 to \$399	297	21.9%	260	27.8%	37	8.8%
\$400 to \$499	247	18.2%	215	23.0%	32	7.6%
\$500 to \$599	258	19.0%	154	16.5%	104	24.6%
\$600 to \$699	160	11.8%	70	7.5%	90	21.3%
\$700 to \$799	110	8.1%	38	4.1%	72	17.1%
\$800 to \$999	98	7.2%	36	3.9%	62	14.7%
\$1,000 to \$1,249	15	1.1%	11	1.2%	4	0.9%
\$1,250 or more	14	1.0%	0	0.0%	14	3.3%
Total	1,356	100.0%	934	100.0%	422	100.0%
Median Costs	\$491		\$428		\$634	
No Cash Rent	58		39		19	

*Percentages are based on renter-occupied units with estimated rents. The Census Bureau calculated monthly housing costs for 100% of the town's renter-occupied housing units with cash rents.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population & Housing, 2000.

Additional Housing and Demographic Data for Montague from the U.S. Census

Table A-9: Household Income Distribution in Montague, 1999

	Montague Entire Town		Turners Falls		Montague Outside of Turners Falls	
Income Level (1999)	# Hshlds	% of Hshlds	# Hshlds	% of Hshlds	# Hshlds	% of Hshlds
<u>Low Income</u>						
Less than \$10,000	426	11.8%	337	16.7%	89	5.6%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	338	9.3%	250	12.4%	88	5.5%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	687	19.0%	445	22.1%	242	15.1%
Total Low Income	1,451	40.1%	1,032	51.1%	419	26.2%
<u>Moderate Income</u>						
\$25,000 to \$29,999	219	6.1%	109	5.4%	110	6.9%
\$30,000 to \$34,999	170	4.7%	101	5.0%	69	4.3%
\$35,000 to \$39,999	305	8.4%	114	5.6%	191	11.9%
Total Moderate Income	694	19.2%	324	16.1%	370	23.1%
<u>Middle Income</u>						
\$40,000 to \$49,999	327	9.0%	168	8.3%	159	9.9%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	271	7.5%	138	6.8%	133	8.3%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	359	9.9%	152	7.5%	207	12.9%
Total Middle Income	957	26.5%	458	22.7%	499	31.2%
<u>Upper Income</u>						
\$75,000 to \$99,999	350	9.7%	140	6.9%	210	13.1%
\$100,000 to \$150,000	136	3.8%	45	2.2%	91	5.7%
\$150,000 or More	29	0.8%	19	0.9%	10	0.6%
Total Upper Income	515	14.2%	204	10.1%	311	19.4%
Total	3,617	100.0%	2,018	100.0%	1,599	100.0%
Median Household Income (1999)	\$33,750		\$24,243		\$40,660	
Area-Wide Median Family Income*	\$48,400					

**From the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, used for EO 418 housing certification purposes for FY 2004.*

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000; Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, Instructions for Completion of FY 2004 Request for Housing Certification, 2003.

Additional Housing and Demographic Data for Montague from the U.S. Census

Table A-10: Percentage of Household Income Spent on Housing Costs, by Income Level and Tenancy, in Montague, 1999

Tenancy and Household Income Level* (1999)	Households with Cost Data**	Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income (Number of Households)				Total Households with Unaffordable Housing (Housing Costs are 30%+ of Income)	
		Under 25%	25-29%	30-34%	35% or More	# of Hshds	% for Income Group**
Owners							
Under \$10,000	49	0	0	0	49	49	100.0%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	185	41	49	23	72	95	51.4%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	316	186	17	43	70	113	35.8%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	282	175	81	16	10	26	9.2%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	492	435	50	7	0	7	1.4%
\$75,000 or Over	358	358	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Total for Owners	1,682	1,195	197	89	201	290	17.2%
Renters							
Under \$10,000	309	14	30	7	258	265	81.0%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	364	90	41	60	173	233	64.0%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	307	158	78	30	41	71	23.1%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	226	178	42	6	0	6	2.7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	88	84	4	0	0	0	0.0%
\$75,000 or Over	53	53	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Total for Renters	1,347	577	195	103	472	575	42.7%

*These income groupings approximate those presented earlier (in Table 4-5 and in Table A-9) for low, moderate, middle, and upper incomes but are not identical to them, due to the slightly different income categories used by the Census Bureau for the housing cost data shown here.

** Housing costs relative to income were estimated for 77% of the town's owner-occupied housing units, and 95% of the town's rental-occupied units. Housing costs were not calculated for the 4% of Montague's rental housing units without cash rents.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

Comparative Housing Statistics for Montague and Nearby Towns from the U.S. Census

Table A-11: Number of Housing Units, 1990 and 2000

Town	Total Housing Units 1990	Total Housing Units 2000	Change 1990- 2000	Percent Change 1990-2000
Montague	3,695	3,844	149	4.0%
Deerfield	2,083	2,060	-23	-1.1%
Erving	584	630	46	7.9%
Gill	670	560	-110	-16.4%
Greenfield	8,067	8,301	234	2.9%
Leverett	699	648	-51	-7.3%
Orange	3,106	3,303	197	6.3%
Sunderland	1,534	1,666	132	8.6%
Wendell	400	439	39	9.8%
Franklin County	5,312	5,678	366	6.9%
Massachusetts	2,472,711	2,621,989	149,278	6.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 and 2000.

Table A-12: Type of Housing Structures, 2000

Geography	Total Housing Units 2000	Percentage of Housing Units in Each Type of Structure			
		Single- Family Homes	Two- Unit Buildings	3 or More Unit Buildings	Mobile Homes
Montague	3,844	55.2%	16.5%	26.1%	2.2%
Deerfield	2,060	80.7%	12.4%	6.8%	0.0%
Erving	630	77.8%	9.4%	11.4%	1.4%
Gill	560	85.5%	3.6%	7.5%	3.4%
Greenfield	8,301	51.2%	17.1%	30.0%	1.7%
Leverett	648	85.5%	8.0%	1.7%	4.3%
Orange	3,303	59.0%	11.0%	21.5%	8.5%
Sunderland	1,666	46.9%	5.1%	48.0%	0.0%
Wendell	439	86.1%	3.9%	0.2%	9.8%
Franklin County	5,678	66.3%	11.5%	18.3%	3.4%
Massachusetts	2,621,989	56.4%	11.6%	31.1%	0.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

Comparative Housing Statistics for Montague and Nearby Towns from the U.S. Census

Table A-13: Housing Tenancy and Vacancy Rates, 2000

Geography	Total Housing Units 2000	Percent Occupied *	Of Occupied Housing Units*		Vacancy Rates**	
			Percent Owner-Occupied	Percent Renter-Occupied	Ownership Units	Rental Units
Montague	3,844	94.1%	60.7%	39.3%	0.8%	5.4%
Deerfield	2,060	95.4%	74.6%	25.4%	1.4%	3.1%
Erving	630	95.2%	78.2%	21.8%	1.1%	5.8%
Gill	560	95.4%	80.6%	19.4%	0.7%	3.8%
Greenfield	8,301	95.6%	53.9%	46.1%	1.1%	3.5%
Leverett	648	97.5%	80.1%	19.9%	0.8%	3.2%
Orange	3,303	92.2%	66.5%	33.5%	2.0%	5.9%
Sunderland	1,666	98.0%	44.3%	55.7%	0.7%	1.2%
Wendell	439	86.1%	84.7%	15.3%	2.1%	1.7%
Franklin County	5,678	92.3%	66.9%	33.1%	1.4%	3.6%
Massachusetts	2,621,989	93.2%	61.7%	38.3%	0.7%	3.5%

*The Census Bureau considers housing units that have seasonal or occasional residents to be vacant (unoccupied).

**The vacancy rates are based on the number of housing units that are available to own or to rent, and does not include units that are unoccupied, but are not on the market (including housing units that have been sold or leased which remain vacant, seasonal homes, and housing that is not habitable.)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

Comparative Housing Statistics for Montague and Nearby Towns from the U.S. Census

Table A-14: Homeownership Housing Costs and Housing Values, 2000

Geography	Median Monthly Housing Costs		Housing Values for Owner-Occupied Single-Family Homes		
	For Homes with a Mortgage	For Homes without a Mortgage	Median	Lower Quartile Value	Upper Quartile Value
Montague	\$892	\$330	\$113,400	\$92,900	\$137,700
Deerfield	\$1,151	\$356	\$153,200	\$121,400	\$193,000
Erving	\$775	\$218	\$96,300	\$82,200	\$116,700
Gill	\$1,037	\$296	\$119,400	\$97,400	\$144,000
Greenfield	\$961	\$345	\$107,300	\$86,700	\$134,800
Leverett	\$1,273	\$441	\$176,900	\$144,600	\$245,200
Orange	\$816	\$295	\$86,600	\$72,700	\$110,800
Sunderland	\$1,227	\$448	\$161,900	\$136,700	\$203,800
Wendell	\$900	\$292	\$100,800	\$81,100	\$128,000
Franklin County	\$978	\$336	\$119,000	\$92,200	\$154,100
Massachusetts	\$1,353	\$406	\$185,700	\$135,000	\$274,800

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Census of Population and Housing, 2000*.

Table A-15: Rental Housing Costs, 2000

Geography	Monthly Contract Rent			Median Monthly Gross Rent*
	Median	Lower Quartile Value	Upper Quartile Value	
Montague	\$425	\$292	\$543	\$491
Deerfield	\$515	\$384	\$603	\$569
Erving	\$456	\$371	\$528	\$515
Gill	\$414	\$293	\$508	\$489
Greenfield	\$434	\$325	\$554	\$509
Leverett	\$688	\$518	\$956	\$809
Orange	\$364	\$200	\$485	\$430
Sunderland	\$675	\$577	\$760	\$613
Wendell	\$505	\$394	\$671	\$613
Franklin County	\$462	\$338	\$596	\$541
Massachusetts	\$605	\$407	\$838	\$684

*Includes utilities.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Census of Population and Housing, 2000*.

Income Eligibility Guidelines for Programs Administered by the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) and for Montague Housing Authority (MHA) Apartments

Table A-16: Maximum Income Eligibility for Affordable Housing Programs, 2004

Number Of People In Household	HOUSING PROGRAMS						
	State-Aided Housing for Families/ Elders/ Disabled ¹ (including housing managed by HRA & MHA)	Low Income Housing Tax Credit		Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers ²		MA Rental Voucher Program	RDI Homeowner-ship Program Low Income (80% of median)
		Maximum Income	Minimum Earnings (or Section 8 Voucher)	Extremely Low Income (30% of median)	Very Low Income (50% of median)		
1	29,200	25,920	16,848	12,950	21,600	17,960	34,550
2	33,350	29,640	19,266	14,800	24,700	24,240	39,500
3	37,500	33,300	21,645	16,650	27,750	30,520	44,400
4	41,700	37,020	24,063	18,500	30,850	36,800	49,350
5	45,000	39,960	25,974	20,000	33,300	43,080	53,300
6	48,350			21,450	35,800	49,360	57,250
7	51,700			22,950	38,250	55,640	61,200
8	55,000			24,450	40,700	61,920	65,150

¹Applicants for state-aided housing for elders must be 60 years of age or older, or have a disability.

²75% of all vouchers must be issued to applicants whose income is at or below 30% of median income.

Sources: Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, 2004; Montague Housing Authority, 2004.